

State of the Union

Reagan launches the Raw Deal

How pro-military policy swept over
social programs in 1981.

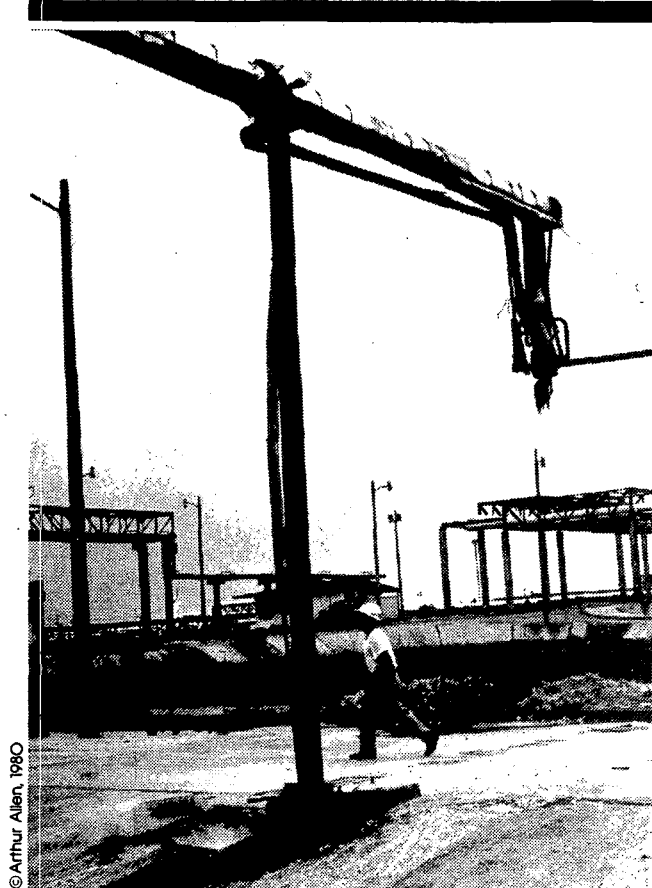
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Nadine Gordimer on the
artist's responsibility in South Africa

THE INSIDE STORY



Oil wealth has sparked an import binge, pushing up the country's external debt and inflation rate at a rapid clip.

Mexican Socialists run on "democracy"

By David Moberg

MEXICO CITY

From the street lamps of Mexico City's major thoroughfare, the Paseo de la Reforma, to the whitewashed walls of the tiniest Indian villages in the mountains of Chiapas, there is a uniform message these days: "Miguel de la Madrid, 1982-1988, vote this way July 4." The country is saturated with the trappings of political campaigning. But with the exceptions of an occasional hand-painted slogan from the left or a few banners for the conservative PAN (National Action Party), all the hoopla—including daily banner headlines on most of the country's papers that are embarrassingly adulatory—is for Miguel de la Madrid, candidate of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party).

That is little surprise, since the PRI is the heir to the parties that have governed Mexico since the revolution in 1929 and is the unquestioned, near-monopoly political force in the country. Madrid's campaign is less a bid for office than a ritual of introduction to the public that he will govern and an opportunity to build his legitimacy to succeed current President Jose Lopez Portillo.

The PRI is a broad coalition linking landowners and peasants, business executives and most of the trade unions. It tries to balance its revolutionary origins with its growing commitment to a market-directed economy. So in the Yucatan, where Mayan peasants squeezing a few ears of corn out of a rocky field co-exist with the wealth of Cancun-style tourism and nearby oil fields, one of Madrid's slogans reads: "In the fields, productivity...with justice." Despite the PRI's stranglehold on politics and its diminishing social concerns (Lopez Portillo's government was the first administration since the revolution not to redistribute more land to the peasants), the party and government still can claim left-wing credentials (for example, its recent joint call with France for negotiations between rebels and the government in El Salvador).

There is a left outside the PRI, but it is not simply a split left, it is a "completely pulverized left," according to Enrique Semo, one of its leaders. Semo, a professor of economic history, is a member of the executive committee of the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico

(PSUM), a recently inaugurated effort to combat that pulverization and make the left presence felt.

Semo, who is now completing a book on the left in Mexico, said that during the '60s and early '70s, the left operated mainly in difficult conditions, especially after the 1968 student protests were brutally suppressed and many individuals on the left took up guerrilla warfare for a period. But the government, recognizing the threat of such eruptions, eased its measures against the left in 1974, making it easier for parties to register and operate openly.

The Communist Party of Mexico (PCM), on whose central committee Semo sat from 1961 until last year, "was the main party of the left, but it was not too much of a force," he said. In 1976 it appealed to the rest of the left to run a common candidate in the presidential campaign. A few other groups, including some Trotskyist organizations, joined with the Communists and drew an estimated 800,000 write-in votes (Mexico's total population is approximately 70 million). After a 1977 campaign law was passed, the Communist-initiated left unity group won 5½ percent of the vote and elected 19 deputies, the largest bloc on the left (300 deputies are elected by majority vote, another 100 set aside for proportional representation of smaller parties).

At its 18th Congress in 1977 the PCM took steps that were unusual, even among similar Eurocommunists. "The Communist Party said it was not the only socialist organization in the country; not the vanguard of anything; a party and not a philosophical sect, so therefore it was possible to have different views but be united on a program; and it saw itself as a party for the creation of a big party of the working class with room for all other socialists and for others," Semo said.

As the 1982 election approached, the sentiment for unity on the left blossomed again. Last August four other parties joined with the Communists to form the PSUM and all disbanded their previous organizations. (One important group, Heriberto Castillo's Mexican Workers Party, dropped out of the united declaration because it opposed forming an explicitly socialist group.) By a narrow margin, the former chairman of the Communists, Arnolando Martinez Verdugo, was selected as PSUM's presidential candidate.

Toward democracy.

"The main subject of the campaign is democracy," Semo said. "The Mexican bourgeoisie has been successful in economic development to a certain extent. It has run in many aspects a successful capitalist economy. But it has failed on democracy. The campaign is for democracy in all senses, not only electoral but in the unions, the universities, the family. The second theme is the fight for the standard of living. Inflation is 30 percent yearly. The condition of more than half of Mexicans is really bad in all senses—nutrition, medicine, schooling."

Realistically, PSUM hopes to win more seats in parliament and more municipal governments (it now controls six). But its emphasis will be equally on trade union activity (it has significant influence in a few unions, especially the large teachers union), campesino organizing and cultural work among intellectuals and students, who, despite excellent job prospects, are quite open to the left for more rational plans to utilize the nation's wealth.

With the discovery of its great oil reserves—which are likely to match Saudi Arabia's—Mexico seemed to be sitting pretty. But David Barkin, professor of economics at the Metropolitan Autonomous University in Mexico City, argues that oil revenues may have been one of the worst things to happen to Mexico. "Because

of oil," he said, "as in many other countries, the government has been able to decide it doesn't have a foreign exchange problem and can indulge in a heavy investment program. But that distorts the economy away from serving the needs of the people."

Oil actually magnifies a distortion already present. Only 30 percent of Mexico's population constitutes the effective internal market; the rest of the population is too poor and marginal to count for much. Government investment, or rather the use of oil surpluses to make up for both the failure to collect taxes from the rich and tax breaks to business, encourages production of domestic consumer goods, such as cars, motorcycles, household appliances, electronic goods.

Even with only 30 percent of the population able to contemplate buying these products, Mexico still has a large internal market. But many of these people, who are benefiting most from the oil wealth, also have been going on an import binge, helping—along with the massive imports of equipment for the oil industry—to push up Mexico's external debt and inflation rate at a rapid clip. Diversion of money into luxury homes and real estate also has fostered inflation, partly because it means less money is devoted to improving the low productivity of Mexican agriculture and industry.

Although the government claims that the country is now close to self-sufficiency in food—even though 70 percent of the population doesn't regularly eat milk or meat products—Barkin thinks that agriculture will not keep pace with needs. Rural areas, including the *ejidos*, or communal lands, are coming more under capitalist market control, which undermines peasant control and is inclined toward export. Meanwhile, inflation has meant that the average worker's purchasing power has dropped to the level of the late '60s.

What would PSUM do differently? First, it would depend much more heavily on a vastly extended domestic market by distributing wealth "as a stable basis for growth," Semo said. Building on the cooperative traditions and organizations of the peasantry that already exist, PSUM would emphasize domestic self-sufficiency in agriculture. It would use oil money to develop independent Mexican high technology industries, possibly using industrial sales linked to sale of Mexican oil in order to penetrate foreign markets. It would cut back subsidies of Mexican businesses.

"You can invest with confidence in big Mexican companies now," Semo said. "None will go bankrupt. Many sectors are subsidized, causing tremendous inefficiency and lack of quality. The oil money goes to subsidize the standard of living of the higher classes, to corrupt and to invest in agriculture, creating a rural bourgeoisie as peasants are being expropriated and social conditions in the countryside every day become more contradictory."

Worsening conditions for much of the country coupled with oil-inspired national hopes could lead to political unrest. That would make an opening for a unified, rational, democratic left. Despite limited immediate prospects, Semo is hopeful. "Mexico has excellent possibilities," he said, "better than many other countries, to develop and to change its system. You don't have the same oligarchies as all over Latin America. This is a modern bourgeoisie born in revolution. And you do have this tradition of revolution, which is important in the attitudes toward change."

"We are very aware that any kind of socialism would be a very different kind here. We are on the frontier of the U.S. We would have to be free of any military alliance. But Mexico is a country big enough and strong enough to propose an independent socialism," Semo said.

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IN THESE TIMES

Will UAW's gamble pay off?

By Michael Hoyt

NEW YORK

IN EARLY JANUARY, WITH AUTO production at a nadir, the United Auto Workers gambled that the moment had arrived to talk to Ford and General Motors: maybe the union could give up something to boost the industry and get the profound changes it needed in return, and maybe it could sell the package to the membership.

It was a tricky dance with three partners and perhaps it's not surprising that even before the Jan. 23 deadline for the two-week bargaining session arrived, the talks bogged down. From the conciliatory tone of both sides, it seemed likely as *In These Times* went to press that the bargaining might be extended, a decision to

The talks will change the bargaining relationship or will sound yet another union's retreat in what already is a devastating year.

be made by Ford and GM plant local union leaders assembling in Detroit Jan. 23.

But sooner or later, sometime between now and the existing contracts' end in September, autoworkers will be judging whether bargaining has achieved UAW union president Fraser's goal to "change the concepts of the collective bargaining relationship," or whether it has merely sounded another union's retreat in what is already a devastating year for labor. Submission goes against the grain in the UAW, and the membership will be looking closely at what's likely to be the most important tentative contract agreement in their union's history.

As complex as they are, and whether they lead to a short or a new long-term contract, the negotiations boil down to trading wage and benefit concessions for job security. Union opponents of any concessions (particularly to GM, which is expected to show a profit for 1981) were already meeting Jan. 15 in Flint to plan how to fight them. But with nearly 300,000 layoffs in their industry, many auto workers will probably wait and examine the details: How much concessions? What kind of job security?

And while the former is easily measured in dollars and cents, the latter can be as elusive as the language allows. Many members have come to understand that these days true job security requires union controls in areas the auto companies have historically regarded as sacrosanct—where the companies produce or buy their parts, how they introduce their new robots and so on. These issues are no longer abstract in a number of factories. Despite a long barrage of company propaganda, some autoworkers realize their goals and those of the company are not the same. Both want a reborn industry, but in different forms.

For example, before negotiations got underway, GM all but halted its \$40 billion rebuilding program, leaving scores

of critical decisions on where to modernize or build new plants—the very shape of the future—hanging over the union side of the bargaining table like a sword. Unless the UAW leaders can win a share in these decisions, the givebacks may look like surrender. The danger is a divided union. If they can't wrest true job security provisions the leaders may be hard-pressed—despite an innovative pricing agreement with GM—to drown out the battle cry of UAW militants. With givebacks they warn, "you'll be financing your own layoffs."

"What's decided now will govern the years of the industry's rebuilding," said Harley Shaiken, a labor and technology specialist and a research fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "The point of maximum leverage is before the process unfolds. I don't like to sound cataclysmic, but that means this series of negotiations is not final yet certainly pivotal to gaining some control of these areas (new technology and "outsourcing"—subcontracting for auto parts from lower-paid workers at factories both here and abroad).

"It would be difficult to win any of these things, but the alternatives to winning them are grim," Shaiken added. "The alternatives are permanent and long-term job loss."

The exception to the rule?

As 1982 unfolds, it appears the UAW will be the exception if it can pull out some measure of victory. As the union sat down with Ford and GM, the Teamsters were wrapping up discussions with the trucking companies' association on a contract that will set the pattern for 1.8 million members, a contract containing vast wage, benefit and work-rule concessions for an industry troubled by recession and deregulation.

Those twin devils plague the airline industry as well. In early January the latest casualties were five unions at Western Airlines, which took 10 percent pay cuts, and pilots and non-union employees at Eastern Airlines, who agreed to a one-year wage freeze if half the airlines' 40,000 union employees go along with the plan.

Even in the rich oil industry, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers failed to win a major goal—a no-layoffs clause—in negotiations with Gulf Oil, agreeing to a tentative two-year contract with a 16 percent wage boost that, if the membership approves, is expected to set the pattern for about 400 more contracts.

Such key negotiations are among those setting the stage for more than 4 million members whose unions are facing the pressure of President Reagan's recession in this critical bargaining year. These include workers in the electrical, rubber, food and construction industries as well as 1.9 million public employees who will be colliding—one union at a time—with Reagan's slashed outlays to state and local governments.

Each group has its particular problems, probably none more serious than those faced by the UAW as they bargain in what *Business Week* called "the pattern-setter for the '80s." Last March, when Fraser and the union declined to discuss concessions with Ford and GM, 191,585 autoworkers were out of work, down from 224,697 at the beginning of the year and close to the 199,000 figure of January, 1980. But the slide steepened sharply this fall, and 290,937 are now out of work—213,855 on "indefinite" and probably long-term layoffs. Ford, which had a profit of nearly \$1.8 billion in 1979, lost \$1.5 billion in 1980 and is expected to show a loss of about \$1 billion for 1981. GM, with nearly \$2.9 billion in profits in 1979, lost \$762 million in 1980, but is expected to climb \$300 or \$400 million into the black for 1981.

Since about three-quarters of all automobiles are purchased with loans, high

interest rates are wreaking havoc on sales, particularly in a recession in which the price of an auto looms larger against fears of shrinking pay. Ford and GM can do little about a falling economy, and they are not going to point to the management mistakes that have also inflicted wounds on the industry. With bargaining approaching, they have instead hit repeatedly at wage and benefit differentials with Japan that they claim are as high as \$8 an hour, saying this is the reason the market share of imports, mostly Japanese, has climbed from 18 percent in 1978 to more than 27 percent now.

Apples and oranges.

The UAW contends Japanese and American workers are statistically apples and oranges. The automakers' figures do not include subsidies to Japanese workers for housing and transportation, nor do they include the Japanese benefit of lifetime employment—an inexpensive factor now, but a mammoth cost in the event of a slowdown. Some union observers note that even though Japanese auto unions are tame and undemanding, Japanese costs will rise as the workforce ages. Current American costs, meanwhile, are bloated with fixed costs, such as pensions, since the industry is running at around 60 percent capacity. Experts like

Shaiken at MIT argue that productivity comparisons too are flawed. "You are measuring U.S. productivity at the bottom of its curve because its running at half capacity, against the end of a high (Japanese) period of productivity growth that probably cannot be sustained at current levels."

Nonetheless, though he does not advocate major concessions and though he stresses that cost is not the only factor in competition, Shaiken acknowledges there is some cost differential now—less than half of what the automobile companies claim. Some in the UAW accept the notion of a gap. "A lot of people think U.S. autoworkers have priced themselves out of competition," said regional director Gray. "There is some truth in it."

The union and GM laid a surprising base for changing the pattern on the first day of negotiations, one that caught Ford by surprise, when they agreed that whatever sacrifices the UAW makes will be passed on "penny for penny" to the consumer, lowering the price of American cars. The move was quickly met with mixed doses of support, puzzlement and skepticism. "It was a clever move on somebody's part, I'm not sure whose," said a laid off autoworker in Detroit.

The innovative agreement was cast as a

Continued on page 10

Many autoworkers now know true job security requires union controls in areas the auto companies have historically regarded as sacrosanct.



Scott Van Orsdal

IN SHORT

PACmen

A report from Public Citizen's Congress Watch, the consumer advocacy group founded by Ralph Nader, has confirmed what the jaded observer might suspect—that business dollars mean anti-consumer votes on Capitol Hill. The Washington-based organization lists how much each member of Congress received from business political action committees (PACs) during his or her most recent campaign. It also grades the senators and representatives on the basis of key votes last year in the areas of consumer protection, government reform, federal subsidies, energy, the environment and tax reform. The correlation is not, as they say, scientific, but in general the lower a legislator's Public Citizen rating, the greater has been the business PACs' largess.

In the Senate, business PAC contributions have roughly doubled with each election. Senators elected in 1976 received an average of \$50,000 during their election campaigns; those elected in 1978 got \$130,000; and those elected in 1980 got \$235,000. (During those years, the average Public Citizen score for senators dropped from 40 to 34 to 31.) The more than \$28 million that business PACs contributed to successful congressional and senatorial candidates in 1980 was about twice as much as all other organizations gave.

And now let's open the envelopes. The moral winner in the Senate is Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), with a Public Citizen rating of 83. His counterparts in the House, Bill Brodhead (D-Mich.) and Gerry Studds (D-Mass.), both got a 97. But the biggest prizes have already gone to Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Texas), whose respective campaigns benefited from \$617,000 and \$258,000 in business PAC money. (Grassley scored a 23, Wright a 27.) Studds, on the other hand, got only \$1,000 from business PACs—no initiative, that guy.

Ha ha ha

A military board of inquiry, reports the *Los Angeles Times* (via PNS), has recommended the discharge of an officer who complained of "practical jokes" among members of his Titan missile unit. According to his attorney, Captain James Kanak was so concerned about the level of horseplay that he feared he might hesitate before following an order to "push the button." In a complaint to his superiors, Kanak said he had witnessed "a considerable degree of frivolity, games-playing, practical joking and hazing." He was told, he said, that this was a "common and accepted component of missile crew duty."

Control remote?

Last month, reports Tonice Sgrignoli of the Philadelphia Reproductive Rights Organization, Pennsylvania Gov. Dick Thornburgh surprised everyone by vetoing a so-called Abortion Control Act. The governor, whose personal opposition to abortion is well-known, had received 13,000 pro-veto messages in eight days—the result of grassroots work by an informal coalition of women's-rights and religious groups, health clinics and community organizations. The Act, as passed in one hectic week by the state house and senate, asserted that a fetus is a human being from the moment of conception and thus is entitled to legal rights. Typical provisions of the Act would have allowed public hospitals to perform abortions only in "emergency" situations and would have limited Medicaid coverage of abortions to cases of endangered life, rape and incest.

But even as he signed the veto, Gov. Thornburgh invited the general assembly to collaborate with him on drafting a more moderate anti-abortion bill. Those favoring reproductive rights are worried, says Sgrignoli, about the lack of union participation in Pennsylvania's legislative battle over abortions (the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union being a prominent exception).

Add'l info

A paradox: While the Reagan administration goes about trimming the fat from the social flank of the budget, reports the *Wall Street Journal*, the Agriculture Department has hindered the populace from taking off a few pounds. The agency has canceled plans to publish a second edition of a diet pamphlet that seven million Americans gobbled up in its original edition. "The government shouldn't be publishing advice on how to lose weight," commented an Agriculture official. Not even the truly fatty?... A step back: A law just signed by President Reagan gives the Pentagon the right to cross-check its files with the IRS and Social Security to find out who hasn't registered for the draft.... But that issue may be moot: According to the *Denver Post* (via PNS), the commander of American forces in Europe has testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that even if the U.S. began drafting soldiers at the outbreak of a European conflict, the Army would run out of trained soldiers "before the draft can take over and send me a steady stream of replacements."

—Josh Kornbluth



Staff members of Citizens for a United Austin celebrate the city's rejection of the anti-gay ordinance.

Though Austin rejects housing referendum, gays are still worried about future measures

AUSTIN, TX—Should landlords be allowed, even permitted to discriminate against gays by refusing them housing?

It was a question that wouldn't have surprised too many people had it arisen in, say, conservative Dallas, or any one of the fundamentalist small towns that pepper the Texas countryside. But it surfaced instead in Austin, which did throw a lot of folks.

Austin, a picturesque town of 346,000 in Texas' rocky hill country, is generally thought of as the most progressive of the state's bigger cities. It is the state capital and the home of the state's largest college, the University of Texas. A good number of its City Council members are considered moderate-to-liberal and its delegates to the legislature are regarded as renegades in a hotbed of throw-back conservatism. The median age is young.

So it was something of a shock that Jan. 16 found Austin residents voting on a citywide referendum on whether it "shall not be unlawful to deny housing on the basis of sexual orientation." Though the issue was soundly defeated, by a vote of 36,000 to 21,000, the aftermath of the campaign still has gays worried.

The ordinance was petitioned onto the ballot by a homegrown Moral Majority-style group, Austin Citizens for Decency (ACD), after the city's Human Relations Committee proposed an ordinance protecting minority groups—the elderly, racial minorities and gays—against housing discrimination.

In one television interview, ACD chairman Dr. Steven Hotze outlined his objections to gays. They are interested in expanding their political base, he said, much as any minority group. But while ethnic minorities increase their numbers by procreation, gays cannot, Hotze said. "So, they turn to recruiting. And where do they recruit? In the schools."

According to the ACD, which championed its discrimination ordinance in a flurry of radio, television and newspaper ads, the issue came down to whether "special privileges should be ex-

tended to sodomites." But Citizens for a United Austin (CUA), which fought the ordinance, thought the issue involved much more than that.

"When we start singling out groups of people to discriminate against, who's next?" asked Robb Southerland, CUA's chairman. "Next might have been the Jews, or Catholics or blacks or browns. It was a total anti-human-rights ordinance. If this one wasn't unconstitutional, then we need to burn the Constitution."

The CUA also conducted its fight in ads. One such ad said: "If you try to buy a home, if your children try to rent an apartment, the landlord will have the right to pry into your personal life. Do you want someone asking about your children's sexual preference? Or yours? It would be legal."

Austinites agreed with Citizens for a United Austin, saying "no" to the measure in a turnout described as heavy by election officials. A city councilman then predicted Council members will pass the Human Rights Committee's anti-discrimination ordinance. But for some Austin gays, the referendum's outcome was far from settling.

"There are two ways of looking at this," said one gay man who asked not to be identified. "Sure, 36,000 people voted not to discriminate against us. But on the other hand, 21,000 voted to deny us our rights."

"We thought that we were safe in Austin, that this was one of the last places we'd have to fight for our rights. If this can happen here, what'll happen if the ordinance comes up in some place like Salt Lake City? Or Des Moines?"

—Wade Roberts

U.S. to scrap welcome mat

WASHINGTON—For the first time in 30 years, the U.S. government may well succeed in a basic reorganization of immigration policy aimed at restricting the flow of Mexicans and other Hispanics across the border.

Alan K. Simpson, the Wyom-

ing Republican who chairs the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, is drafting legislation that should be introduced later this month or in early February. This legislation would seek to limit the number of illegal immigrants, mostly Mexican, through a new enforcement program that relies less on the border patrol than it does on a new system of worker identification and employer sanctions.

The legislation will aim to quell the flood of immigrants by removing the twin "magnets" of jobs and social welfare programs, thereby choking off incentive to come here. The bill will be far more comprehensive than other proposals, including those offered last summer by President Reagan.

Proponents of a more restrictive immigration policy believe that if Simpson moves quickly, he can push the bill through his subcommittee and into the full Judiciary Committee, where chairman Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) will be an important ally. Passage on the Senate floor would then be virtually assured.

Rep. Romano L. Mazzoli (D-Ky.), chairman of the House Immigration Subcommittee, is regarded by restrictionists as a pliant partner, their only fear being that something in the legislation could rouse the opposition of House Judiciary Committee chairman Peter Rodino (D-N.J.).

Time is of the essence since many politicians are anxious to avoid the volatile subject of immigration during election campaigns. Action must be completed by mid-spring at the latest.

The Simpson legislation itself is but the tip of an iceberg. Proponents of restrictive immigration policies think that at long last they have nailed together a workable coalition across the political spectrum—from the NAACP, to environmentalists, to organized labor, to the New Right. Moreover, they believe that opposing groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, Hispanic and other immigrant rights' organizations, are ill-prepared to block a blitzkrieg.

The Simpson bill is expected to contain several elements:

- A system of worker identification, to be phased in gradual-

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ly. At first it would require an alien to present two standard pieces of identification—driver's license, military ID, voter registration card, etc.—along with an affidavit before getting a job. Eventually, this system would be replaced by a non-destructible card or number that could be checked against a central computer, much like a credit card.

- Employer sanctions, most likely including a series of escalating fines against employers who do not check the legality of prospective alien employees, and who repeatedly employ illegal immigrant labor.

- A ceiling of about 400,000 on total legal immigration, excluding refugees. (In 1978, the U.S. recorded about 600,000 legal immigrants.) Refugee matters would continue to fall under existing separate legislation passed in 1980.

- Amnesty or some other form of "legalization" for illegal aliens already in the U.S. This is a complicated issue for conservatives, who won't stand for a measure that appears to reward illegality. Thus, Simpson will insist that enforcement provisions be in place before amnesty is granted. Amnesty may require concrete evidence of a job and some standing in the community. It could require a U.S. sponsor.

- Reform of political asylum procedures, under which those requesting asylum would bring their case to a specially trained federal officer. Appeals could be made to the attorney general. This procedure would do away with the quagmire of bureaucracy through which an asylum plea must now make its way.

- Though it is not yet clear what Simpson's position on guest workers will be, Reagan wants a trial program, as does big agriculture, and the Wyom-

ing senator may well opt for that approach.

The immigration issue is tricky politics for the Reagan administration. Shifting the focus of immigration policy from the White House to Congress, where Simpson can carry the battle and take the heat, may also shift pressure away from the White House and sidestep collisions between competing forces in the administration.

©Pacific News Service
—James Ridgeway

Brutus seeks asylum in U.S.

On Jan. 14, exiled South African poet Dennis Brutus gained a temporary postponement of the Justice Department's deportation proceedings against him when his lawyer unexpectedly announced that Brutus would seek political asylum here.

Judge Irving Schwartz of the Immigration and Naturalization Service gave Brutus 20 days to apply to the State Department for asylum. The judge said the INS case will not reconvene until State issues an advisory on that application. This process normally takes 30 days.

When he ruled at a November hearing that Brutus was "deportable" for a technical violation of his work permit, Judge Schwartz listed political asylum as one of four possible routes still open to the poet—the other three being an INS extension of his visitor's status, voluntary departure and deportation. Brutus, who held distinguished-visitor status in the U.S. before the deportation order, remains an outspoken opponent of South Africa's apartheid regime.

Brutus' supporters suspect that the attempt to deport him

stems from the Reagan administration's move toward greater cooperation with Johannesburg. According to *Inside BOSS*, a recent expose of the South African secret police by one of its own agents, the South African government considers Brutus one of its major enemies.

Attorney Arthur Serota, coordinator of the Western Massachusetts Dennis Brutus Defense

fore the Court, disagreed with Burger's logic. "The ordinance is a minor infringement on protective rights," she said. "But that infringement is more than offset by the importance of people's interest in the electoral process."

Justice White, in his dissenting opinion, followed the same line of reasoning. "Staggering disparities have developed between

four months, came despite a Dec. 14 concession offer by the nine unions at the brewery. Smith also reneged on a promise to visit Peoria Heights before deciding the plant's fate. State and local officials, along with local utilities, had hinted that they might keep the plant open.

"Pabst would never tell the unions what it wanted," said Jack Yancick, a Firemen & Oil-



Pabst, ignoring a concession offer by all nine unions at its profitable Peoria plant, abruptly pulled the plug.

Committee, says that defense committees in Chicago, Seattle, Minneapolis, Amherst, Springfield, Mass., and Northeastern University in Boston have gathered about 10,000 signatures on petitions to the INS backing Brutus' request for permanent-resident status. Statements of support have come from two dozen legislators, including the full membership of the Congressional Black Caucus and senators Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) and Charles Percy (R-Ill.).

"We can understand why the government of South Africa has deported Dennis for his work against apartheid," Serota says, "but we can't let the U.S. government do the same thing."

—Gary Michael Tartakov

Court hits the \$250 ceiling

In a recent ruling the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Berkeley, Calif., ordinance that applied a \$250 ceiling to individual and corporate contributions to committees involved in ballot measure campaigns ("In Short," Nov. 18, 1981). The ruling also invalidated campaign contribution limitation laws in Florida and Massachusetts.

The Court's basic argument, with only Justice Byron White dissenting, was that the Berkeley ordinance violated First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. "The Court has long viewed the First Amendment as protecting a marketplace for the clash of different views and conflicting ideas," wrote Chief Justice Warren Burger. "That concept has been stated and restated almost since the Constitution was drafted. The voters of the city of Berkeley adopted the challenged ordinance, which places restraints on that marketplace."

Berkeley city attorney Natalie West, who argued the case be-

spending for and against various ballot measures," he wrote. "Recognition that enormous contributions from a few institutional sources can overshadow the efforts of individuals may have discouraged participation in ballot measure campaigns and undermined public confidence in the referendum process."

"Perhaps," White concluded, "neither the city of Berkeley nor the state of California can prove that elections have been or can be unfairly won by special-interest groups spending large sums of money, but there is a widespread conviction in legislative halls, as well as among citizens, that the danger is real. I regret that the Court continues to disregard that hazard."

A 1976 Supreme Court ruling (*Buckley v. Valeo*) said that limitations on contributions to candidates and their committees were constitutional. The reasoning was that large contributions to office-seekers create the possibility of corruption. But the Court did not see a similar potential for abuse in ballot measure campaigns.

—Clifford Fred

Brewery goes down the drain

PEORIA, IL—It was a grim New Year's Eve for about 800 employees of Pabst Brewing Co. That day, the nation's fourth-largest brewer announced the closing of its profitable Peoria Heights operation.

Pabst is capable of producing more than nine million barrels per year at its breweries in Milwaukee and Peoria Heights, located 227 miles apart. But this year—with sales down 10 percent and the company expected to finish with its first loss in 23 years—only about 6 million barrels of beer will be sold.

The decision by William F. Smith Jr., Pabst's president of

ers business agent who was the most vociferous of union leaders at the plant. "I think [the decision] was predetermined."

That the company didn't bother to respond to the concession offer stirred anger from the leadership of organized labor to the rank and file. "Pabst should have responded to the proposals instead of breaking the news like they did," said Michael R. Miller, veteran leader of the AFL-CIO central body in Peoria. Thirteen-year brewery worker Paul Hatfield said: "My thinking went in stages. First I felt bad because there are no jobs. Second I felt hatred because Pabst wouldn't give us a chance. And then I was so angry I was ready to start a Pabst boycott in Illinois." Talk of a boycott, usually reserved for the likes of Coors, is spreading.

Peoria Heights plant manager Bob Tiemann, visibly shaken at the New Year's Eve press conference, said he was "very sad" about the decision and admitted that he wasn't privy to discussions at Pabst's Milwaukee headquarters. Tiemann's five years in Peoria Heights were highlighted by an enormous increase in productivity that made the operation the most efficient among the company's five breweries during the last seven months of 1981. The closing will waste a three-year, \$5 million upgrading of the 47-year-old plant—which included the installation of a computerized production-line simulation system to decrease down time. "Christ, what a waste," said a Peoria industrial engineer.

That feeling was shared by J.R. Andres, Pabst vice president for industrial relations, who told union leaders at a December meeting: "Our problems have not been caused by any man in this room or by any people who are represented by people in this room. The problem has been in top management, particularly in marketing and sales."

—Kevin R. Bronson



Gary Michael Tartakov

CALIFORNIA



Popular support for weapons freeze grows

Initiative organizers have "struck a nerve"—the fear of nuclear war.

By Thomas Brom

SAN FRANCISCO

BARELY 10 WEEKS INTO THE campaign, petitioners for the California Nuclear Weapons Freeze are nearly halfway home to putting an initiative on the state ballot in November. The measure calls for a bilateral freeze on the production of nuclear weapons and delivery systems as a first step to ending the threat of nuclear war.

Campaign spokesman Bob Collis says volunteers have gathered 150,000 signatures to date of the 346,000 necessary to qualify for the general election. Organizers hope to collect 500,000 signatures by the April 22 deadline, providing a healthy cushion to compensate for the inevitable disqualifications.

"The response so far has simply been incredible," says Julie Guthman, signature coordinator for the Northern California office. "With full-time coordinators in only four Bay Area counties, we've gotten 85,000 signatures and dozens of endorsements. The Sonoma County office brought in 14,000 names in just nine weeks—the highest county total so far in Northern California."

Claire Greensfelder, local constituency coordinator, was hired to generate support among church groups, labor unions and college campuses. "I've been working for the past month just responding to calls," she says. "The United Methodist Conference sent out 600 petitions to 300 pastors in Northern California. The California Federation of Teachers, the Longshoremen, American Association of University Women, campus freeze committees—they've requested hundreds of petitions. I haven't gotten to the outreach yet."

Response from the Catholic Church has been even more dramatic. Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco endorsed the nuclear weapons freeze in a pastoral letter to churches in the three-country archdiocese—two months before 1,500 petition parties kicked off the drive. Quinn then encouraged the church's social justice commission to form a "nuclear project" and hire additional staff.

Pia Moriarty, director of the new project, says she intends to provide continuing moral education on nuclear war with parish peace committees, elementary and secondary schools and peace groups outside the church. "I think moral education is achieved through action," she says. "It's a spiral process. Right now, I believe the appropriate educational work is the nuclear weapons freeze."

"Quinn's letter was the most well-received statement on nuclear war since

George Kennan called for disarmament," comments Steve Ladd, co-chair of the Northern California campaign and a staff member of the War Resisters League. "We aim to make the freeze a household word by November."

The California freeze campaign is the only statewide initiative drive so far, but it is by no means an isolated phenomenon. A nuclear weapons freeze clearing house in St. Louis keeps tabs on petition campaigns now underway in over 40 states. "The weapons freeze has been endorsed by 26 U.S. representatives, two senators, 46 Catholic bishops and more than 50 national organizations," says national co-director Karin Fierke. "The resolution has been supported by city councils, passed by voters in congressional districts and presented as stacks of petitions to several state legislatures."

Striking a nerve.

Obviously the nuclear weapons freeze campaign has struck a nerve in the body politic. It comes at a time of unprece-

Old timers at electoral politics are leading the initiative drive.

ented preparation for nuclear war—from the \$1.6 trillion budgeted for new weapons over the next five years to President Reagan's revived "civil defense" program revealed earlier this month.

"The freeze campaign is a practical way of dealing with people's frustrations," says Bob Collis. "You can't sue the Defense Department. But if 20 million people in California support the freeze, it can make a hell of a difference."

There are, however, other successful peace campaigns using other tactics, both here and abroad. The nuclear weapons freeze has several particularly interesting aspects that set it apart from the rest.

"No bucks for nuke power"

SAN FRANCISCO—The Abalone Alliance, the organization that led a blockade at the Diablo nuclear plant last September, has decided to take its protests against nuclear power to the front door of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), which has already pumped \$2.5 billion into the Diablo reactor. This action, tentatively slated for sometime in March, signals a major shift in strategy for the Abalone Alliance.

The Alliance also plans to march through San Francisco's financial district and publicly protest other giant corporations—including General Electric, Wells Fargo and Bechtel—that profit from nuclear power and weaponry. The Alliance's move to force California's pro-nuclear corporations into public scrutiny followed a statewide conference held last November.

Another direct action proposal debated at the conference would encourage ratepayers to join a consumer boycott of corporations with big stakes in nuclear technology. The proposal calls for an extensive "economic pressure campaign" in the form of utility rate protests and strikes as well as boycotts of targeted banks and corporations.

The economic pressure campaign will probably re-enact the Alliance's 1980-81

rate protest against the Diablo reactor, when thousands of ratepayers bypassed PG&E and sent their utility bills and checks—often inscribed "No Dollars for Nuclear Power"—directly to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). This protest, according to an Alliance member, spurred the commission to hold hearings on nuclear power last year.

The 1982 strategy also zeroes in on California's Humboldt reactor, whose history of serious accidents and mishaps has been downplayed by power company officials. Humboldt County Abalones, who are leading a drive to decommission the faulty reactor, plan to spotlight the plant's nuclear waste problem and its possible threat to public health.

If adopted, the economic pressure campaign represents a new direction for Abalone Alliance, whose attempt to halt the Diablo reactor has long absorbed most of its time and energy. Because low-income and elderly people are among the hardest hit by rising utility bills, a rate-strike and/or protest has the potential to draw a larger cross-section of the population than the anti-nuclear movement has attracted. And the timing is propitious: the Public Utilities Commission has just granted PG&E a new \$900 million rate hike, which means that heating costs for Californians will continue to soar.

Since 1979, PUC has granted PG&E rate hikes totalling \$3 billion. Between January and May of 1980 alone, the utility received rate hikes of \$2.2 billion—more than any other utility in the country received in an entire year. The

First and foremost, the freeze is based on an electoral strategy to influence policy. The California petitions don't mean a thing if signers aren't registered by November and prepared to vote in the general election. Even then, the resolution only requires Governor Brown to write letters sending the text of the initiative to the president, the secretary of state and of defense and members of Congress.

The freeze has already attracted congressional interest, simply because representatives start to worry when their constituents are up to something. "We've put the administration on notice that we're serious," Ladd says. But since the measure is expressly "bilateral," it could easily be shrugged off if the Soviet Union doesn't respond. In addition, the strategy leaves out more than half the electorate who either can't vote or won't because they have given up trying to influence Congress at the polls.

Campaign veterans.

Given the style and strategy of the freeze, it's not surprising to find old-timers at electoral politics heading the campaign. The California freeze initiative really began at the kitchen table of Los Angeles activist Jo Seidita, a current state Democratic central committeewoman and former member of the Democratic National Committee.

"We got the idea from a clip about three state senatorial districts in western Massachusetts that passed a weapons freeze initiative in 1980," Seidita says. "The measure got 59 percent of the vote, even though 30 of 33 towns in the district also voted for Reagan."

Seidita, who led the 1968 petition drive that put Eugene McCarthy's name on the California ballot, took the freeze idea to her Unitarian social concerns committee, and then to the general assembly of the Unitarian Church. Both responded enthusiastically.

About the same time, Dr. Randall Forsberg of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies in Brookline, Mass., drafted a simple statement calling for a nuclear arms freeze. Through peace groups and conferences, she circulated the "Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race" around the country. The short preamble to the call became the California initiative.

In September 1981, millionaire Los Angeles businessman Harold Willens agreed to join the incipient California campaign as coordinator and chief fundraiser. Willens, an ex-Marine who walked through Hiroshima shortly after it

Continued on page 10

most recent increase has drawn a storm of protest from labor and citizen groups: as proof of public discontent, the Citizens Action League points to the 80,000 signatures of San Francisco residents who signed its petitions protesting PG&E's request for the 1982 increase.

Even though thousands of disgruntled Californians appear willing to support a campaign to curb PG&E rate hikes, Abalones may still have problems convincing consumers that the Alliance wants to work with them. Like most antinuclear networks in the U.S., the Abalone members are usually young, white and middle-class. Alliance member Steve Stallone says that "the type of hippie, New Age culture" often associated with the Abalones has made it difficult to reach working people and minority Californians in particular. And though the Abalone currently seems to be gaining more legitimacy among organized labor, staff person Susan Swift believes that many members of the Alliance "just don't have a labor consciousness."

But if the Alliance can focus attention on issues such as survival and environmental destruction, this may eventually lead to a broader analysis of domestic policies. And if its new economic strategy gets underway in California, the Alliance may find itself taking on the nuclear power giants with the help of consumers fed up with ever-increasing power bills.

—Susan Ferriss and Diana Hembree
Diana Hembree is a reporter for the Santa Cruz Phoenix. Susan Ferriss is a freelance writer in San Francisco.

DEMOCRATS



The Ted-Kennedy-in-'84 camp suffered a setback when the Hunt Commission made Iowa the first primary.

Party throws out reforms

By John Judis

AFTER VICE-PRESIDENT Hubert Humphrey caused a widespread revolt among Democratic voters by winning the 1968 presidential nomination without winning a single primary, Democratic reformers changed the party rules. They made party nominations dependent upon primary votes rather than the wishes of power brokers like Chicago's late Mayor Richard Daley. They set up quotas to ensure the representation of minorities and women among party delegates. And they created the Midterm Convention to provide a forum for party debate over issues.

Democratic voters will now have less of a say in selecting their nominee.

Meeting Jan. 14-15 at Washington's Shoreham Hotel, Democratic politicians and party officials and representatives from the AFL-CIO reversed or seriously modified some of the post-1968 reforms. Their avowed purpose was to prevent "outsiders" like Sen. George McGovern in 1972 and Jimmy Carter in 1976 from gaining the nomination just by winning primary campaigns. They denied they wanted to undo party democratization. "We're not trying to throw the baby out with the bath water," Democratic National Committee (DNC) director Eugene Eidenberg said.

But Democrats who had participated in the reform process had their doubts. "I think it's a big disappointment," said Leon Shull, the director of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), about

the party's decision to reduce primary influence. "It's a step back from saying we want a party where Democrats are democratically elected."

Unfaithful delegates.

Two different groups met—the DNC's Executive Committee and the 69-member Commission on Presidential Nominating Rules, chaired by North Carolina Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. There was little debate during the meetings, which adjourned one day early. "Everything was presented as a deal that had already been made," one labor staff member remarked.

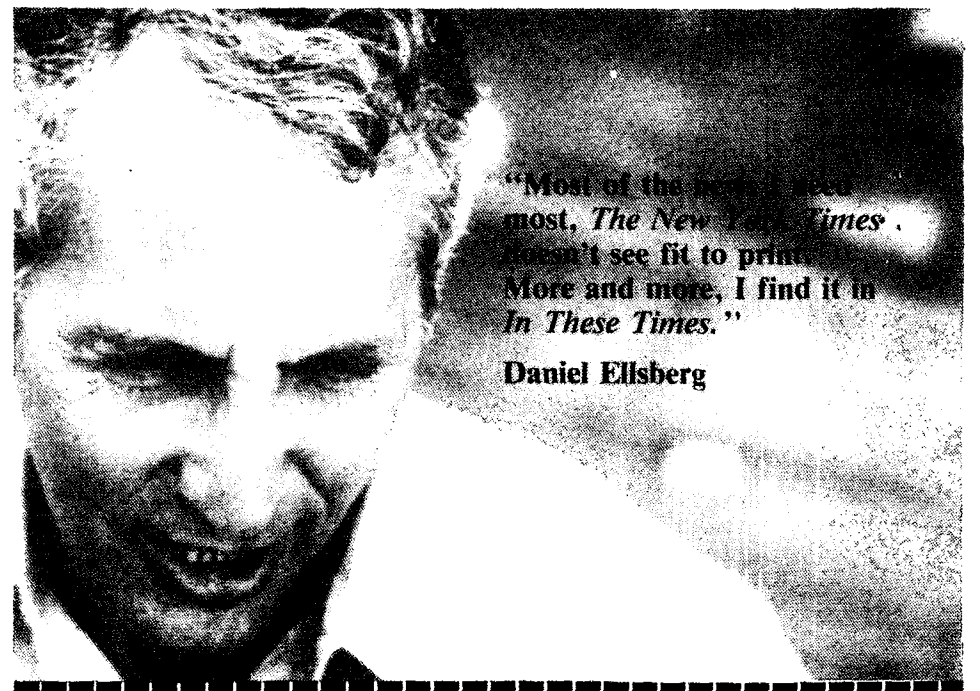
To reduce the influence of the primaries, the Hunt Commission voted to add 548 uncommitted delegates, comprised of public and party officials, to the convention delegates. These 14 percent—enough to have blocked Carter's nomination in 1980—can vote for whomever they want. The commission also voted to revoke the controversial Rule 11H, that required delegates elected in the primaries to be "faithful" to their candidates on the first convention ballot. Candidates can approve who will be their delegates prior to the convention, but at the convention, delegates need only act according to their conscience.

These decisions represented a compromise between Democrats, who want to retain the 1968 reforms, and labor officials, including United Auto Workers president Douglas Fraser and AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland, who want to create a party managed from above. Fraser had called for 30 percent of the delegates to be uncommitted public and party officials. Their assumption, which one labor official deemed "doubtful," is that they will be able to use their influence over the uncommitted officials to prevent a candidate unfriendly to labor from gaining the nomination. Their strategy also assumes that labor has less chance of influencing the voters themselves through the primary process.

Some women and minority Democrats were angered by these new rules. Since the added delegates, who will be chosen from a priority list beginning with gov-

ernors and big city mayors, will be predominately white males, both women and minorities will have little clout among the key uncommitted convention delegates.

DNC political director Ann Lewis explains the changes as a "reasonable trade-off between a pure nominating process and a real need that many of us feel to do a better job working with our officeholders." Lewis thinks that the split between the "electoral ladder" of candidates and the "party ladder" of elected officials has imperiled Democratic candidates in the past and that guaranteeing official representation at the convention will



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Daniel Ellsberg

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State of the Union



State of the Union addresses usually reveal little about the condition of our country. They are public relations vehicles designed to buoy a president's standing with the populace. In These Times has decided to offer its own assessments of the state of our union.

In his debate with former President Jimmy Carter, candidate Ronald Reagan asked voters whether they could honestly say they were better off than they had been when Carter took office in 1976. The same question can now be asked of the first year under Reagan: Are Americans better off economically than they

were a year ago? And, is the world more peaceful? Is our nation more secure?

In our first articles on the State of the Union, Richard Du Boff, professor of economics at Bryn Mawr University, and Bogdan Denitch, professor of sociology at the City University of New York, answer some of these questions.

Reaganomics: one down, three to go

By Richard B. Du Boff

WHAT LIES IN STORE FOR the U.S. economy in Year Two of Reaganomics? Reaganomics One—1981—hatched the second, and more serious, of back-to-back recessions that have brought us almost three years of uninterrupted economic stagnation. The trough of the first recession occurred in May 1980; the low point of the second seems to be approaching. This means that the expansion phase between these twin slumps lasted barely a year—easily the shortest recession-to-recession recovery span since World War II.

Two forces are at work in the present dismal economic picture. One is the persistent difficulty a capitalist economy encounters in generating sufficient business investment to maintain vigorous economic growth and low unemployment. This prominent characteristic of the post-war American economy was widely discussed by economists with varying viewpoints in the '50s and '60s—the tendency for the unemployment rate to decline less and less from its recession peak once the economy enters its recovery-expansion phase, and the shortening of the recovery phase itself from one business cycle to the next. The pattern has reasserted itself over the past decade. While it seemingly had disappeared during the '60s, only large outlays for the Vietnam war kept the economy recession-free for a record 105-month "peacetime" expansion from early 1961 to November 1969.

The 1974-75 recession, the worst since the '30s, left an unemployment residue that never fell much below 6 percent of the labor force, even during the 1978-79 expansion. Joblessness climbed back to 7.6 percent in the summer of 1980, dipped to 7.2 percent a year later, then shot up to 8.9 percent in December, close to its early-1975 postwar peak (which may soon be surpassed). (Such official unemployment rates substantially understate true unemployment by excluding both

"discouraged workers"—those without jobs so long that they quit searching—and workers involuntarily cut back to part-time schedules. Thus, increasing the official unemployment rate by one-third gives a more accurate, and still conservative reading of the real extent of unemployment.)

The other force in this dismal economic picture is the inability of industrial capitalist nations to control inflation by any means other than deliberately engineered recessions. The strategy is thoroughly inefficient: for some temporary moderation in inflation, great losses in production and employment are absorbed. The late economist Arthur Okun estimated that squeezing the economy to combat inflation, through "tight" monetary and fiscal policies, yields roughly a one-to-nine trade-off. Only one-tenth of the effect is the desired drop in the inflation rate, while nine-tenths of the impact is "real," in terms of lost output and lost jobs. Yet only in the U.S. does this kind of capitalist economics go virtually unchallenged—and "only in America" is it implemented exclusively via restrictive monetary policy and sky-high interest rates.

Both of these forces—the chronic weakness of private-sector demand and the stifling effects of high interest rates—are being reinforced by Reaganomics. As an offset, the 1981 tax and regulatory giveaways to business will do little to spur capital spending. It is, in fact, unlikely that Reagan and company engaged in any serious study of the determinants of private investment before embarking on their "economic recovery" program. Their chief goals were not positive (even by capitalist standards) but negative—to get back at the poor and underprivileged, welfare mothers, university intellectuals, environmentalists and occupational safety advocates, social workers and legal aid practitioners.

The real objective was to roll back the advances made between 1963 and 1972 by an array of reformist pressure groups that successfully used federal power to override the legendary reaction and corrup-

tion of state and local governments and vied with corporate economic power on its own terrain—the nationwide economy. In their zeal to restore to corporate America its rightful privileges, the Reaganomics hit squads may have convinced business that it had been "right" all along and that now, at last, the federal "bureaucracy" would be stopped from "interfering" with short-run profit maximizing, asset-enhancing merger activity and overseas expansion—all those pursuits that handsomely contributed to the "economic Dunkirk" that budget director David Stockman discovered upon arrival in Washington a year ago.

Furthermore, the Reagan assault on the public sector will chip away—and perhaps periodically break down—the strongest single economic support for private-sector production and sales. Right-wing ideologues see expansion of government activity as a zero-sum game. When government increases, they reason, it does so at the expense of the private economy. But this is only true in a short-run situation, when all resources are fully employed. More often, public outlays on everything from nuclear submarines and highways to police officers and mailmen put a floor under the economy and insure it against a '30s-style collapse.

Now reductions in federal spending are starting to affect, among other things, state and local government units that had become increasingly dependent on Washington for budget support. Between 1950 and 1979, the share of state and local expenditures financed by federal grants and revenue-sharing rose from 11 to 23 percent. But the trend is being reversed. For the first time since the '30s, the economy is mired in recession at the same time that nonmilitary government purchases are being pruned at all levels of government rather than expanded.

On the transfer payment side, the "war against the poor" threatens to soften economic activity even more and prolong the recession. Food stamps, aid for low income families with dependent children, medicare and CETA are all being slashed. Unemployment insurance payments have also been decreased. During the 1974-75 slump, two-thirds of jobless workers received some unemployment compensation. Now it appears that the proportion has sunk below 40 percent. Changes in the unemployment compensation rules by the Carter administration, enlarged by Reagan budget cuts, included the cancelling of the 12-month extension ordered in early 1980 and the changing of eligibility requirements so that some workers laid off in 1980 could not accrue new eligibility for unemployment insurance before being laid off again.

Sooner or later, any economic recovery will run smack into the "tight money" policies being administered by a monetarist Federal Reserve system. Reagan's combination of loose fiscal policy (huge budget deficits produced by tax cuts and military spending increases) and tight monetary policy guarantees heavy demands for limited loanable funds—and no end to historically high interest rates. Already, weekly money-supply figures showing any rise—even in the face of a declining economy—cause an immediate drop in stock and bond markets, since investors fear a reaction by the Federal Reserve (stricter controls over commercial bank reserves and renewed hikes in interest rates).

Of course, the Reagan administration is not happy with this scene. Lately Treasury Secretary Donald Regan has been sniping at Fed chairman Paul Volcker, in essence accusing him of sabotaging changes for economic recovery. But Reagan and Regan have a weak case: Volcker can argue that, so long as inflation remains a threat to the nation's well-being, his is the only anti-inflation game in town.

Such contradictions of Reaganomics are plain for all to see. But there are others. An administration promising "re-industrialization" is damaging our national productivity with actions that will accelerate the deterioration of our public capital—mass transit and railways, highways and port facilities, water, sewage, waste disposal and postal systems. Even

before Reagan, the U.S. probably had the most dilapidated and decaying public infrastructure of any industrial capitalist nation. We have also had the worst overall productivity record since 1965. It is hard to believe that these two facts are unrelated because in other respects the U.S. has real productivity advantages over Germany, Japan, France, Sweden and other market economies (less dependence on foreign oil, a larger internal market and more experience coping with efficiency problems in service industries).

In a recent study for the Council of State Planning Agencies, called *America in Ruins*, Pat Choate and Susan Walter took an inventory of investment requirements in public works. They found "broad trends of decline in both the quantity and quality of virtually every type of public works facility in the nation.... A large and growing number of communities are now hamstrung in their economic revitalization efforts because their basic public facilities—their streets, roads, water systems and sewage treatment plants—are either too limited, obsolete or worn out to sustain a modernized industrial economy."

The only "positive" Reaganomics policies are the escalating military budget and the income tax cuts enacted in 1981, with a second round of cuts due in July when a sluggish economy will welcome a boost from consumer spending. But these policies, "rational" from a short-run capitalist viewpoint, will suck the economy into a new cycle of instability and productivity decay. Stimuli for consumer spending will simultaneously stir up demand for credit and set off a new wave of debt expansion. The fragile financial structure will develop new stresses and strains, and the Fed will be faced with the old dilemma—tighten control over the money supply and risk causing one or two spectacular bank failures or corporate bankruptcies, or else crank out enough money to "validate" higher levels of private debt and thereby worsen inflation and accommodate greater speculative excesses.

Higher military spending may be marvelous news for some corporations, but it appears to have fewer civilian-industry spinoffs than it did a decade or two ago (for example, aircraft and computers). Now it could be draining critical resources and talents from "frontier technologies," particularly in electronics, where the U.S. is rapidly losing consumer markets to the Japanese.

What never ceases to amaze in this grim scene is the enormous capacity for ideological self-delusion exhibited by the

The widely held belief of American business leaders that Reagan is good for business reveals myopia of the highest order.

American business community at large. Their belief that Reagan is "good for business" reveals myopia of the highest order. It may be too much to expect a long-run view from the power centers of American capitalism: can a leopard change his spots?

But for the American left, large questions loom. As Reaganomics fouls up the economy badly enough to make Jimmy Carter and crew look competent by comparison, what alternatives are available for the bottom two-thirds of the income scale who will bear the costs of Reagan's vain effort to recreate the economy of the '20s? How can the Democratic Party be denied the rewards of the electoral victories that may flow its way for (at best) doing nothing at all? What visions of a more secure and less demeaning economic life can be proposed? And how to start persuading people that a massive enlargement of the public sector is desperately needed and that its prerequisite is an equally massive reduction in military spending? ■

Reagan and crew get tough abroad

By Bogdan Denitch

RONALD REAGAN'S FOREIGN policy represents a reaction-caricature of post-World War II American foreign policy. Its ostensible purpose is to restore the economic and military superiority that the U.S. enjoyed immediately after the war.

This politics of nostalgia has a broad appeal to those who would like to turn back the clock in both social and economic policies. But there is little reason to believe it will be possible to return to the high cold war period.

As the traditional foreign policy establishment understands, American policy-makers must contend with a rough military equivalence between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the increasing independence of Western Europe, the rela-

All was not quiet on the Western European front, where Reagan's posture prompted a massive peace movement.

tive weakening of the American economy within the world market and the growing assertiveness of third world countries. All these changes demand new and more flexible policy responses. But any attempt to initiate such a response by the Reagan administration has been met by sharp denunciations from its New Right constituency.

The Reagan administration's tough stance has not been able to change the relationship of forces in the world. Instead, the administration's posture has prompted a massive Western European peace movement, which has spread throughout the NATO alliance. Not having a unified direction, it shows great local variety in emphasis, popularity and impact of governments and opposition parties. More skeptical about the Soviet Union than previous anti-nuclear and peace movements, the current movement is nevertheless primarily directed at the NATO alliance and the "special relationship" to the U.S.

The major issues between the U.S. and Western Europe are deep-seated and difficult to resolve. The Western Europeans have a more direct stake in détente, economically and politically, than the U.S. They are far more dependent on oil imports and are unwilling to allow the U.S. to manage the Middle East on their behalf. The Western Europeans—and this is by no means limited to the left—are also unwilling to view every third world revolt in terms of U.S.-Soviet confrontation, and they increasingly distrust not only American motives but, above all, American judgment.

This distrust has been deepened by the American courtship of the South African regime and Latin American dictatorships, the gratuitous repeal of the Clark amendment barring aid to the Angolan rebels and Reagan's generous advice to the poor countries to put their trust in the free market. The U.S. is perceived as ideologically mesmerized by a new and confrontational get-tough policy vis-à-vis the Soviets, and U.S. proposals for theater nuclear forces are judged in this light.

Thus the massive peace and antinuclear demonstrations in Europe are driven by three major conclusions about U.S.-Soviet relations:

- an increasing distrust of U.S. pol-

icymaker's judgments and motives;

- fear that once the missiles are stationed, Europe will be targeted for nuclear destruction even if there is not total war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union; and

- the increasing belief among U.S. strategists and informed publics that the old scenario of a massive Soviet tank assault across Western European plains is simply not probable in the near future.

The demonstrators doubt that the deployment of new nuclear rockets has a defensive function. They see the deployment, instead, as part of a general get-tough strategy—part of the American attempt to get over its post-Vietnam syndrome.

A major element left out of most American defense debates is the presence of the independent French nuclear force, which is by no means negligible and makes any Soviet-U.S. agreement on limiting nuclear exchanges in Western and Eastern Europe unrealistic. On defense, the French agree that France must have its own means of defense to have its own independent policy.

This independence has already been demonstrated in a direct rejection of the official U.S. line in Central American and South Africa. France has recognized the left-wing FDR in El Salvador and will sell arms to Nicaragua.

The West European peace or anti-nuclear activists have not faced the issue of an independent foreign policy. If Europe is to be autonomous in the Soviet-American confrontation, it must have its own defense policy. The question is not whether Europe should have its own nuclear weapons, since France already has them. It is whether, in the absence of American nukes in Western Europe, Europe should not be armed with at least a substantial conventional deterrent.

At least there are examples of independent defense policies that can provide some guidelines. Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia have come up with similar conclusions: broad citizen-based defense policies do not come cheap.

U.S. on Poland.

The Polish crisis has widened the differences between the U.S. and Western Europe. When the French and other Europeans attack the martial law regime, the crackdown on the free Polish trade unions and the massive arrests of Solidarity activists and supporters, it is a policy

Continued on page 22

UAW

Continued from page 3

significant concession by GM, though as *The Wall Street Journal* noted, GM's profit margin on each car remains the same, while it can use worker's concessions as its principal marketing tool instead of spending money on rebates or other sales incentives. The gamble is whether it will increase sales, and analysts were quickly noting that it would take very large concessions by workers to add up to enough money to attract the consumer. GM says it takes about 130 hours to build a car at what it claims is a total labor cost of \$19.65 an hour. So labor accounts for only about \$2,600 of the average \$11,000 auto.

The UAW's Gray, however, believes the agreement opened an important door. "We can talk to them about anything now, about outsourcing, the ration of salaried staff to blue-collar workers, the location of plants, pricing. These things are bargained in other parts of the world and there's no reason they can't be here. It seems to be a totally different ballgame now."

The current GM contract says, for example, "...the location of plants, the schedule of production, the methods, process and means of manufacturing are solely and exclusively the responsibility of the corporation..." How many of these kinds of management prerogatives were on the table was unknown at press time. On the union side, the first chips insiders believe to be on the table are some health insurance benefits and the membership's nine yearly Paid Personal Holidays, or PPH days. Ironically, the holidays were introduced into the contracts to bolster employment and were considered steps

on the way toward a four-day week. Shaiken believes giving them up is the opposite of what should be done.

He advocates linking the introduction of new technology to job security, and "One way is that for each 1,000 robots, the members get X number of paid personal holidays. This links robots to shorter work time and thus more jobs." Controlling outsourcing, he said, is more complex. He suggests clauses that keep the percentage of sales dollars going to UAW members constant. "If it's 20 percent now, for instance, negotiate something to keep that percentage constant."

"Autoworkers are caught in the jaws of a powerful economic vice, between new technology and outsourcing," he said. "If you stop one, the other moves. You have to control both."

The spirit and history of the UAW make it a union uncomfortable with retreat, even if in the judgment of its leaders it is only a tactical retreat to thwart such powerful economic jaws.

With their union leaders, the government and threatened bankruptcy all pushing them, only 59 percent of the Chrysler Corporation's workers voted to grant that corporation the second round of concessions it got. Certainly, workers were reluctant to part with what by September will amount to \$120 a week and they probably sensed that they were getting little in return. There were 115,000 Chrysler workers in 1978 and some 58,000 are working now. Fraser's seat on the board and union access to company financial data did not seem to change the arithmetic, nor did those tradeoffs, as the union leaders hoped, make it "unpalatable" for GM and Ford to seek similar concessions.

There is a legacy of bitterness. "My plant was closed right after the concessions," said Bill Parker, who worked at Chrysler's Lynch Road assembly plant in Detroit. "Everything we got was phony;

every gain was nothing. I see the same thing happening with GM and Ford."

Given the stormy record of the UAW's relationship with the auto companies, some members are uncomfortable in the cooperative light bathing the current talks, a departure in style the leadership believes the times demand. Many opposed to concessions believe the union could have waited until September instead of setting this grave precedent, and between now and then prepared the membership to fight, if necessary, for true job protection. The union has a record high strike fund, over \$380 million now.

Some members also note that by September the Reagan administration and some economists believe the economy will be on the upswing, and that possibly the long-awaited "pent-up demand" for automobiles would put the industry on more normal footing for the bargaining.

But the leaders, perhaps because of the desperate needs of both sides, bet that now is the time for some drastic moves. They lobbied hard to get local union leaders to agree to the discussions. But they will probably have to lobby much harder to get the membership to approve significant concessions.

That job will be much easier if they can come away from the talks with some form of job protection that is more than smoke. Douglas Stevens, editor of the rank-and-file newspaper for the massive Linden, N.J., GM plant, is among those already organizing against concessions. But he concedes, "It's hard for me to put a price on a guaranteed job, but if I was guaranteed I would not lose a job to a robot, I'd certainly be willing to consider some sacrifice. According to Stevens, the factory is scheduled to receive 110 robots in the near future.

Michael Hoyt is a former New Jersey reporter whose stories have appeared in *American Lawyer*, *The Progressive*, *New Jersey Monthly* and *In These Times*.

Nukes

Continued from page 6

was leveled by the A-bomb, formed Business Executives Move for Peace during the Vietnam war years. He agreed to raise \$400,000 for the petition-gathering phase of the freeze campaign.

Organizers here are focused on getting those half million signatures by the April deadline. But a national freeze meeting last year projected a long-term strategy as well that will take years to develop.

"We see four major phases to the campaign," Steve Ladd says. "The first is demonstrating the potential of the freeze—we're already doing that in Massachusetts and California. The second is broadening the base of our support, primarily through the churches. Third is focusing our attention on national policy makers, and last is winning the national debate on nuclear weapons by supporting congressional—and hopefully presidential—candidates."

The whole scenario sounds like an instant replay of the late '60s, when broad sections of the anti-war movement pushed Eugene McCarthy and then George McGovern to national prominence. Freeze campaign workers—many of them veterans of past initiative drives in California—believe the victories can be repeated without engendering some of the false hopes of past campaigns.

Still, the freeze campaign runs the risk of being overtaken by a resurgent peace movement that seems ready to do much more than sign petitions. A national freeze campaign meeting this week in Denver will have to develop tactics flexible enough and militant enough to keep community, church and student groups from racing up its back.

Our Country Is In Danger!!

Americans! Daughters and Sons of Liberty!

Our country and our people today face the greatest peril of our 206 years as a nation. Reminiscent of the days of George III and his rapacious Tories, multinational corporations and the government they fully control are turning into a nightmare the dream of the founders of our nation.

They are the modern George III. They constitute a predatory establishment that has set up in our country a government of, by and for multimillionaires.

They hold in contempt the common people of our country. They are the cronies of bloody dictators around the world, with whom they share a common flag—the dollar sign. They revile and dishonor American history and humanist values of lay and religious prophets since time immemorial.

They lay waste the American spirit, turning our country into a jungle devoid of principles, morality or a sense of national purpose. They condone and even encourage crime, corruption and amorality among the rich and powerful, but are ready to "chop off the hand" of the poor who might steal a loaf of bread.

They have turned the electoral process into a brazen auction of public office, where the highest bidders are the powerful multinational corporations.

They have wrecked our economy and thrown millions of our people onto the scrap heap of the unemployed. In this our beautiful land, blessed with a bounty of human and natural resources, scores of millions now face the prospect of hunger, privation, illness and an old age of misery and neglect.

They are the slick con-artists who promised to get government bureaucracy off the backs of the people, but instead are saddling America with a new bureaucracy of bloated corporate plutocrats.

They are the Scrooges who steal food from hungry school children and slash aid for the blind, the crippled, the old and the poor, in order to further enrich the rich and to fatten the military establishment.

They are the semi-literate yahoos who deny aid to education, the arts and sciences, and loans to needy students.

Traitors, Bigots, Warhawks!

They are the unabashed traitors who are turning over our beautiful forests, prairies, rivers and lakes and seashores for rape,

plunder, pollution and poisoning by the apostles of greed.

They are the bigots, racists and bluenoses who sneer at human rights and seek to turn back the clock a hundred years for women, blacks and minorities, and to establish a police state in our country.

They are the Neanderthals who despise the beautiful and precious cultural, racial and ethnic diversity which has made our nation a glorious microcosm of the human race.

They are the new robber-baron who seek to destroy that bulwark of democracy in our country, the free trade-union movement. They want to restore sweat shops and drive down further the rapidly sinking standard of living of the American working people.

They are the bloodsuckers who propose to squeeze a trillion and a half dollars (nearly \$35,000 per American family) out of the hides of the middle and working classes and poor of our country, to finance a wasteful, insane arms race with the Russians, which can result only in the bankruptcy of both countries, and the possible destruction of the entire human race.

They are the mindless warhawks who cold-bloodedly draw up "scenarios" for a nuclear war in which all our great cities and four-fifths of our population would be incinerated.

In the face of this awesome peril we must unite the American people to reclaim their country and their government from the multinational corporations; to defuse the arms race and use the tens of billions saved to alleviate want here and abroad; to join with other nations in the spirit of U Thant to conduct unified campaigns

against the proliferation of nuclear weaponry, against pollution, against poverty, against uncontrolled population growth; to place anti-social industries such as petroleum under social ownership and the major corporations in all industries under social control; to institute decentralized economic planning as suggested by John Dewey and Charles Beard half a century ago; to liquidate the sinister, militaristic and anti-democratic CIA; to reduce sharply our bloated standing military forces, which as George Washington warned us some 200 years ago, can lead only to political dictatorship; to provide with public funds for the welfare of the underprivileged and to create an economic democracy parallel to political democracy.

Our Patriotic Duty!

To fulfill these historic tasks, we call for a revival of the organization and the spirit of Sam Adams' SONS OF LIBERTY (in the context of our time, SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF LIBERTY).

DSOL will become the inheritor of the tradition of Thomas Paine, Sam Adams, Crispus Attucks, Benjamin Rush, Thomas Jefferson, William Lloyd Garrison, Sojourner Truth, John Brown, Susan B. Anthony, William H. Sylvius, Eugene V. Debs, A.J. Muste, and the host of heroes and heroines of the countless struggles for freedom and justice in our country.

DSOL will nourish and restore the American aspiration for human equality; for respect for the judgment of the common people; for allegiance to freedom of expression and the right of self-determination; for cooperative enterprise; for human rights and conscience above property and institutions; for sympathetic

interest in the new, the untried, the unexplored.

DSOL will set a new style in our country's political arena: militancy without violence or adventurism; radicalism without sectarianism; patriotism without jingoism; populism without demagoguery; principle without dogma.

Sisters and Brothers! Fellow Americans! To reclaim America, to defeat the enemies of our nation, the enemies of the human race, let us join together:

For the defense of our people and our land!

For life, for liberty, for the pursuit of happiness!

For the restoration of our country as a beacon of hope for the peoples of the world!

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IN THE WORLD

WEST GERMANY

Ingredients of a mild response to the Polish crisis

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

THE RESTRAINED WEST GERMAN reaction to the Dec. 13 military takeover in Poland has prompted a spate of vehemently anti-German cartoons and editorials in the U.S. and to a lesser extent in the French press. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), the peace movement and the rest of the West German left—now reappraising the whole *Entspannungspolitik*, the policy of détente with Eastern Europe—are shocked and bewildered by the insults heaped on them.

The German press has reproduced a large sample of this hostile comment. Perhaps the biggest shocker was Ronald C. Nairn's column in the Dec. 15 *Wall Street Journal*, titled "Should the U.S. Pull Out of NATO?" Nairn, identified as an international businessman with a primary interest in agriculture, gave this answer: "The time has come for the U.S. to sever its ties with NATO." He argued that the U.S. should not think that a Soviet conquest of Western Europe would soon no longer be massive or sophisticated. "Let the Russians have it and ruin it—America's future lies elsewhere," he reasoned. "Southeast Asia has some of the fastest developing economies in the world.... Then there is East Asia, so vast in its potential as to stagger the imagination. There is also the Pacific rim of South America and beyond that South Asia and Africa await."

In comparison, wrote Nairn, "Europe seems a puny affair. The U.S. must begin to view itself as a true global power. In this regard, politically and philosophically, Europe has little to give and something to detract." This is not the "isolationism" America's allies have been dreading, but something else.

Because of their antennae in East Germany and other Warsaw Pact countries, Germany's Social Democrats feel they are just as well or better informed than the Americans about the background of Gen. Jaruzelski's coup. In Bonn, the general is considered a lesser evil than the Soviet invasion they believe his coup was meant to forestall. And they fear that if he fails, the Russians will come in and slaughter. Apparently this is the same analysis made by the Roman Catholic Church, whose cautious line following the coup has matched the SPD's. Catholic bishops in Europe have been warning that the very existence of the Polish people may be at stake. They speak of a "duty to survive."

Moral cowardice.

American (and French) attacks on the Germans have suggested they are acting out of moral cowardice conditioned by their economic interests in Poland, especially overdue bank loans. Certainly bankers may be interested in the loans to the exclusion of other factors, but the concern of the SPD, not to mention the peace movement, is much broader.

Anyway, Europeans have never outdone Yankee traders in expressing economic self-interest in terms of moral indignation. But what is self-interest in this case? Less than a week before the coup, the *Journal* reported that recent detailed documents on Poland's finan-

cial condition had persuaded Western bankers—American and German included—to start writing off their Polish loans as losses. In a Dec. 7 editorial, the *Journal* argued against bailing out Poland financially in order to save its democratic renewal. It called the reforms "half measures. Yes, they are talking about freeing prices.... And they are even talking about democracy. But they are not talking about denationalizing the state industries that the commissars want

West Germany with the prospects of an economic disaster of major proportions. The repercussions may deprive West Germany of much of its Eastern European market at a time when worldwide recession is reducing markets elsewhere. Unlike the U.S., West Germany lives off foreign trade.

It is almost as if some American business circles, foreseeing the powder trail of ruin and social explosion running from Eastern to Western Europe, have already decided to write off as a hopeless loss, not just outstanding bank loans to Poland, but the whole of Europe.

So far, the French seem not to have noticed that the American press campaign against the Germans is readily extended to Europe as a whole—including France, whose extraordinary outpouring of sympathy for Poland is virtually invisible to Americans. Perhaps this is one of the things Chancellor Helmut Schmidt wanted to point out to Francois Mitterrand when he rushed to Paris to dine with the French president Jan. 13.

Germans have been especially perplexed by the French attacks. In West Berlin, Andreas Zumach of the German Protestant churches' Action Reconciliation Service for Peace told *In These Times*, the "historic difficulties between France and Germany, and the still existing deep mistrust of the French people toward Germans" didn't explain the "profoundly

historic experience between our two peoples," said Zumach. "Especially we as Germans have got to acknowledge that changes within Eastern European countries could only be brought about by the people living there, within the political, social, ideological circumstances they live in. We should do nothing in the West to create more dissidents, because dissidents are outsiders, who are lost to the real work of changing the system from within."

Those words seem to echo the reasoning of the patient majority of the West German new left. Throughout the '70s, while the terrorists were capturing the headlines, the new left "worked through the system." Ironically, when the German peace movement emerged, some of the French leftists who romanticized the Baader-Meinhof terrorists for their desperate attack on West German society quickly condemned the peace movement, calling it a product of the same flawed German mentality that produced terrorism.

There is more irony in the misunderstanding between the German and French left. Zumach explained, "The same people in our country, or in our movement, who would come out 100 percent now for Solidarity and would in this regard be fully in the French line, are the ones who are responsible for creating the misunderstanding that this peace movement



to continue to run. They are not talking about *direct* foreign investment."

The interest rates the Poles accepted were so high that Western bankers have already gotten their money back. "And, the *Journal* said, "some bankers boast privately that even were they forced to write off their Polish loans now they might show a profit on their loans to the nation over the past decade, so lucrative have been these deals."

It concluded that though "Americans tend to like the Polish people and don't want to see them ground under the Soviet boot," there was nothing to do but leave the country to the Russians. "The threat, after all, is not so much of a Soviet invasion. The Soviets are already in Poland. The threat is of a crackdown. They have a gun on the Poles, and what they're doing to the West is called extortion."

For months now Poles and their European friends have speculated that Western banks will never see their money again. This has been the butt of jokes by Poles of all political hues. And some optimistic leftists believed that Western capitalists would go on throwing good money after bad down the Polish rathole, and that to keep the cash flow going Moscow would let Polish socialism take on a more attractive look.

Thus Poland's financial crisis would create a space that would allow Solidarity to grow and perhaps even thrive. But money management is probably the last area in which America's ruling class can be outsmarted.

German capitalists are no fools either. But the bankruptcy of Poland presents

wrong interpretations" of the German peace movement by the French press. "The misunderstanding between the French and German left started after the Oct. 10 Bonn demonstration, when the French press started giving this interpretation of the peace movement as being chauvinist and nationalistic," he said. "For us in the peace movement, it's really a problem to understand that."

When interviewed, Zumach had just emerged from a weekend of anxious discussion among German and Dutch peace movement representatives, who recognize the Polish coup as a tremendous setback that requires them to rethink several basic problems.

Zumach pointed out that a basic condition of the *Entspannungspolitik* of the past 12 or 13 years had been to accept the political results of World War II and not intervene in the internal affairs of Eastern Europe. In Germany, this has a special meaning, since many Germans—including refugees who were driven out of parts of the Reich put under Soviet, Polish or Czech sovereignty—do not accept those boundaries. In the German right, the notion that Poles and other Slavic peoples are inherently incompetent and must one day be ruled again by the Germans is not dead. So one reason the German left is being discreet about Eastern European troubles is because it doesn't want to encourage chauvinist notions such as this. Thus the blasts from the French left seem even more unfair.

"We are the last people to give recommendations as to how the Polish people should handle their affairs because of the

is nationalist and wants the reunification of the two Germanies. They are the same ones with illusions about Germans solving the German problem and overcoming bloc borders in the next few years. It's really an absurd situation."

Until recently, Zumach, along with the majority of the movement, believed that German support was the "kiss of death" for any independent movement in Eastern Europe, including Solidarity, given the history of World War II. But now he is not so sure. "We had a long discussion with our Dutch friends just yesterday. On the other hand one could say—and this is to some extent self-criticism—that if we as a movement in the West had got some acknowledgement from the East, if we had come out supporting Solidarity, if Solidarity in Poland could have said, 'See, we get sympathy and help from the Western peace movement which at the same time is demonstrating against new American Cruise and Pershings,' then it might have made it harder for the government of Poland to crack down on Solidarity."

According to Zumach, a reevaluation of détente is underway. "Our Dutch friends from the Inter-Church Council say that now we have to admit that this policy has not only come to an end, but that it has more or less failed—because, for one thing, it didn't prevent the arms race. Secondly, it didn't really help to liberalize the internal systems of the East. So we've got to look for a completely new policy." But no one has any idea what it should be.



ANIMORA
The Inevitable Crossing the Red Sea

S. Kumalo,
Animal



By Nadine Gordimer

South African writer Nadine Gordimer has won several prizes for her novels and short stories. Her latest novel, *July's People*, was published last year. The novel before that, *Burger's Daughter*, was at first banned in South Africa but was later "unbanned." This article is excerpted from the Neil Gunn lecture that Gordimer delivered in 1981 at Edinburgh as guest of the Scottish Arts Council; it was earlier printed in longer form in the English journal *New Society*.

There is a question that bursts with the tenacity of a mole from below the surface of cultural assumptions in a country like South Africa: do people and can people make a common culture if their material interests conflict dramatically?

I don't think one can ignore the mole; though blind, it knows instinctively where the daylight is.

The nature of art in South Africa today is primarily determined by the conflict of material interests in South African society. Equal economic opportunity, along with civil and parliamentary rights for all 26 million South Africans, is rightly and inevitably the basis for any consideration of the future of the arts. Man has no control over the measure in which talent is given to this one and withheld from that; but man, through the state, controls the circumstances in which the artists develop.

Every artist has to struggle through what Pablo Neruda calls the "labyrinths" of his chosen medium of expression. That is a condition of the artist's being.

As to the artist's place in the outer world, I doubt if any artist ever finds himself in the ideal condition of Hegel's "individual consciousness in wholly harmonious relationship to the external power of society." That's a Utopia where we should simply run to fat. But there can have been few, if any, examples in human history of the degree, variety and intensity of conflicts that exist between the South African artist and the external power of society. That external power is at its most obvious in the censorship laws, running amuck through literature and every now and then lunging out at other arts.

Yet it is at the widest level of the formation of our society that the external power of society enters the breast and brain of the artist and determines the nature and state of art. It is from the daily life of South Africa that there have come the conditions of profound alienation which prevail among South African

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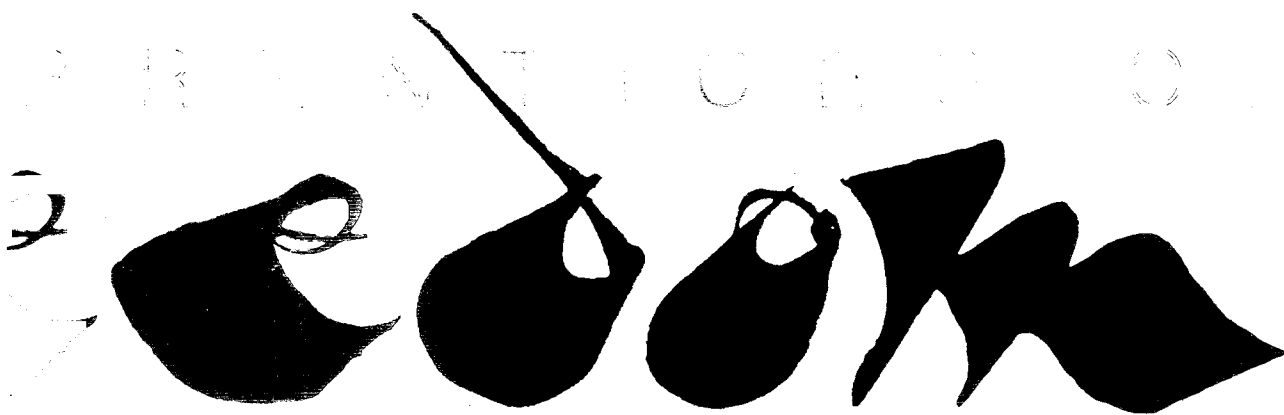
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criterion. It is that by which his work
will be judged *by his own people*, and
they are the supreme authority since it is
only through them that he can break his
alienation. This is the cultural credo of
the Black Consciousness movement. The
Black Consciousness thinker, Bennie
Khoapa, states that the black artist's on-
ly option is personal transformation; he
must be ready to phase himself out of
the role of being carrier to what the
black poet, Mafika Pascal Swala, calls
white official "swimming pool and cara-
van culture" in South Africa.

The black artist has only to do what
every artist must in order to become one:
face his own reality, and—as a black—he
will also have interiorized the stan-
dard of relevance set up outside.

But relevance has another demand.
Struggle is the state of the black collec-
tive consciousness and art is its weapon;
the black artist accepts this as the imper-
ative of his time. But weapons are inevit-
ably expected to be used within an or-
thodoxy prescribed for the handling of
such things. There is a kit of reliable
emotive phrases for black writers, a
ready-made aesthetic for black painters
and sculptors, an unwritten index of
subjects for black playwrights and list of
approved images for black photographers.
Agitprop (as always, everywhere)
binds the artist with the means by which
it aims to free the minds of the people. It
licenses a phoney sub-art.

Yet the black artist is aware that he is
committed, not only as a voluntary act,
but in the survival of his own being, to
black liberation. It is at this point the
black artist has to assert the right to
search out his own popular artistic voc-
abulary with which to breathe new life
and courage into his people. His purpose
to master his art and his purpose to
change the nature of art become one aim.
The white artist is not quite in the reverse
position; that would be too neat for the
psychological complexity of South Afri-
ca's curious cultural norms. He can, if he
wishes, find his work's referent in an aes-
thetic or ontological movement within
the value-system traditional to whites.
White South African culture will not re-
pudiate him if he does.

Yet few white artists take up these op-
tions. The white artist who sees or feels
instinctively that exclusively white-based
values are in an unrecognized state of
alienation, knows that he will not be ac-
cepted, cannot be accepted by black cul-
ture that is seeking to define itself *with-
out the reference* to those values that his
very presence among blacks represents.

A generation ago the white artist
assumed the objective reality by which
his "relevance" was to be measured was
somewhere out there between and yet

encompassing black and white, in a third
dimension sketched by the freedom of
the arts. Now he finds that no such rele-
vance exists; the black has withdrawn
from a position where art, as he saw it,
assumed the liberal role a black political
thinker, Nosipho Majeke, once defined
as "conciliator between oppressor and
oppressed."

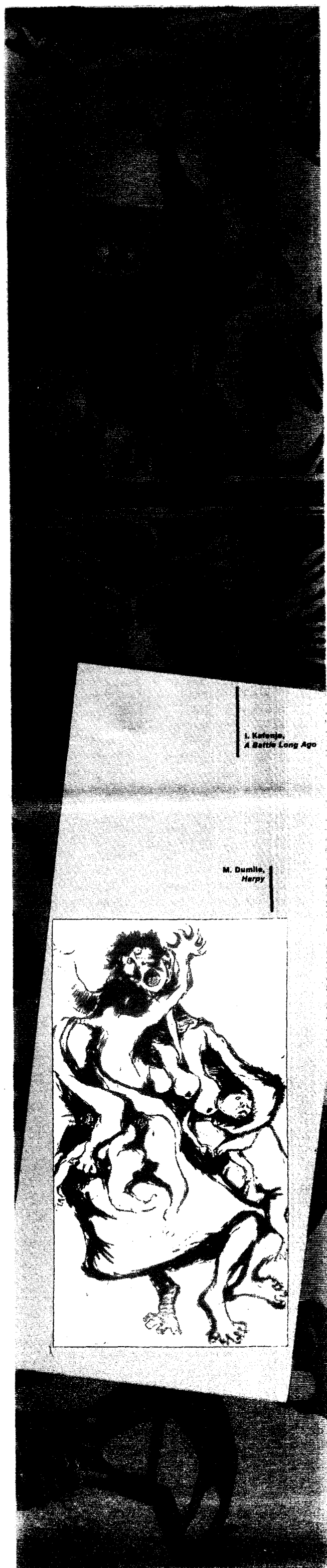
A different way.

If the white artist is to break out of his
double alienation, now, he too has to
recognize a false consciousness within
himself; he too has to discard a white-
based value system. But unlike the
black, he does not have a direct, natu-
ral, congenital attachment to the real en-
tities of South African life.

We are not speaking of artistic modes
and forms here, but of the substance of
living from which the artist draws his vi-
sion. Exploitation by whites, which the
blacks *experience as their reality*, is
something the white artist repudiates, re-
fuses to be the agent of. It is outside
himself; he experiences it as surrogate
victim through a moral attitude or ra-
tional empathy. Thus the black creation
of new selfhood is based on a reality he,
as a white, cannot claim and that could
not serve him if he did, since it is not his
order of experience.

If the white is to find his true con-
sciousness, express in his work the real-
ities of his place and time, if he is to
reach the stage where commitment rises
within him to a new set of values based
on those realities, he has to admit openly
the order of his experience as a white as
differing completely from the order of
black experience. He has to see the
necessity to find a different way, from
that open to the black artist, to recon-
nect his art through his life to the total
reality of the disintegrating present, and
to attempt, by rethinking his own atti-
tudes and conceptions, the same posi-
tion the black artist aims for: to be seen
as relevant by and become committed to
an indigenous culture.

In proposing this thesis at home, I
have been accused of using the schema
of a Black Consciousness philosophy,
turning it on its head as a White Con-
sciousness one. It is perhaps an indica-
tion of the rethinking, remaking needed
in South African cultural contexts that
for years no one, not even blacks, ever
questioned the exclusive use of white
cultural analyses. In my view, South
African writers and artists should assert
the urgent need and right to use what-
ever ideas, from whatever source, may
reflect the facts of life in our country
and penetrate the cataract of preconcep-
tions grown over our vision. A purely
Continued on page 22

I. Kufunjo,
A Battle Long AgoM. Dumile,
Harpy

EDITORIAL

When the going gets tough, the left must get going

The popular lack of faith in business is reflected in disenchantment with Reagan's rehashed policies.

When he took office a year ago, Ronald Reagan was a highly popular president who quickly demonstrated an ability to get Congress to follow his lead almost blindly. Now, a majority of Americans—52 percent—think he is doing a poor job. Even so, the president is more popular than his programs, and the people have more faith in him than they do in the corporate establishment that he so openly serves.

In his campaign for the presidency and in his first year in office, Reagan has consistently contrasted government inefficiency and constraints on initiative with private sector efficiency and vigor. As he said in New York Jan. 14, those in the private sector "hold the key" to "economic recovery." Business, he says, can restore our society to health through the engine of "the greatest collection of incentives in 50 years" (before the social legislation of the New Deal) because now their rewards will be greater. The business community, he insists, can better look after the needs of the American people than can their elected representatives.

But the American people seem not to agree. A recent Harris poll found three of four Americans believe business is not "helping to bring down the rate of inflation," two out of three Americans believe business is not "plowing back profits to make the economy grow" and it is not "putting the interests of the economy ahead of short-term business gain." And a 52 to 41 percent majority believes that business is not "changing from being interested in short-term profits to being interested in long-term growth."

This popular lack of faith in business is reflected in a growing disenchantment with Reagan's program and policies. Another Harris poll, taken last month, indicates that a 71-24 percent majority is convinced that by the end of 1982 "the rich and big business will be much better off," while a 70-27 percent majority believes "the elderly and the poor will be especially hard hit." By smaller majorities, the American people also believe that inflation will not fall below 10 percent this year, interest rates will not come down sharply, unemployment will not be reduced and the economy will not ex-

pand at "a healthy rate."

In short, there is a high level of disbelief in Reagan's promises, enough to make his overall job rating negative. Last month, according to another Harris poll, Americans gave him a rating even lower than Jimmy Carter's at the same point in his term, and much lower than either Richard Nixon's or Lyndon Johnson's after the first year of their terms.

Where's the opposition?

As a result of these and other polls, Republican leaders are now worried about

dent will hang himself and his party.

But the reasons for this lack of effective opposition go deeper. Reagan is different from mainstream Democrats in his open identification with corporate interests and the wealthy and in his thinly disguised disdain for organized labor, blacks and the poor. The Democrats, of course, have relied on the votes of organized workers, blacks and the poor since New Deal days. But the Democrats' identification with working Americans, and those unable to find work, served corporate interests well during past decades of an expanding economy and American world dominance. And Democratic presidents, from Franklin Roosevelt to Jimmy Carter, as well as Democratic leaders of the House and Senate, have been no less committed to corporate profitability than have their fellow Republicans. Favoritism to big business interests has been a matter of degree between the major parties, not of kind.

In this sense, Reaganism is the culmination of the dominant Democratic liberalism of recent years, the next logical step imposed by a period of slower growth and increasing competition from the

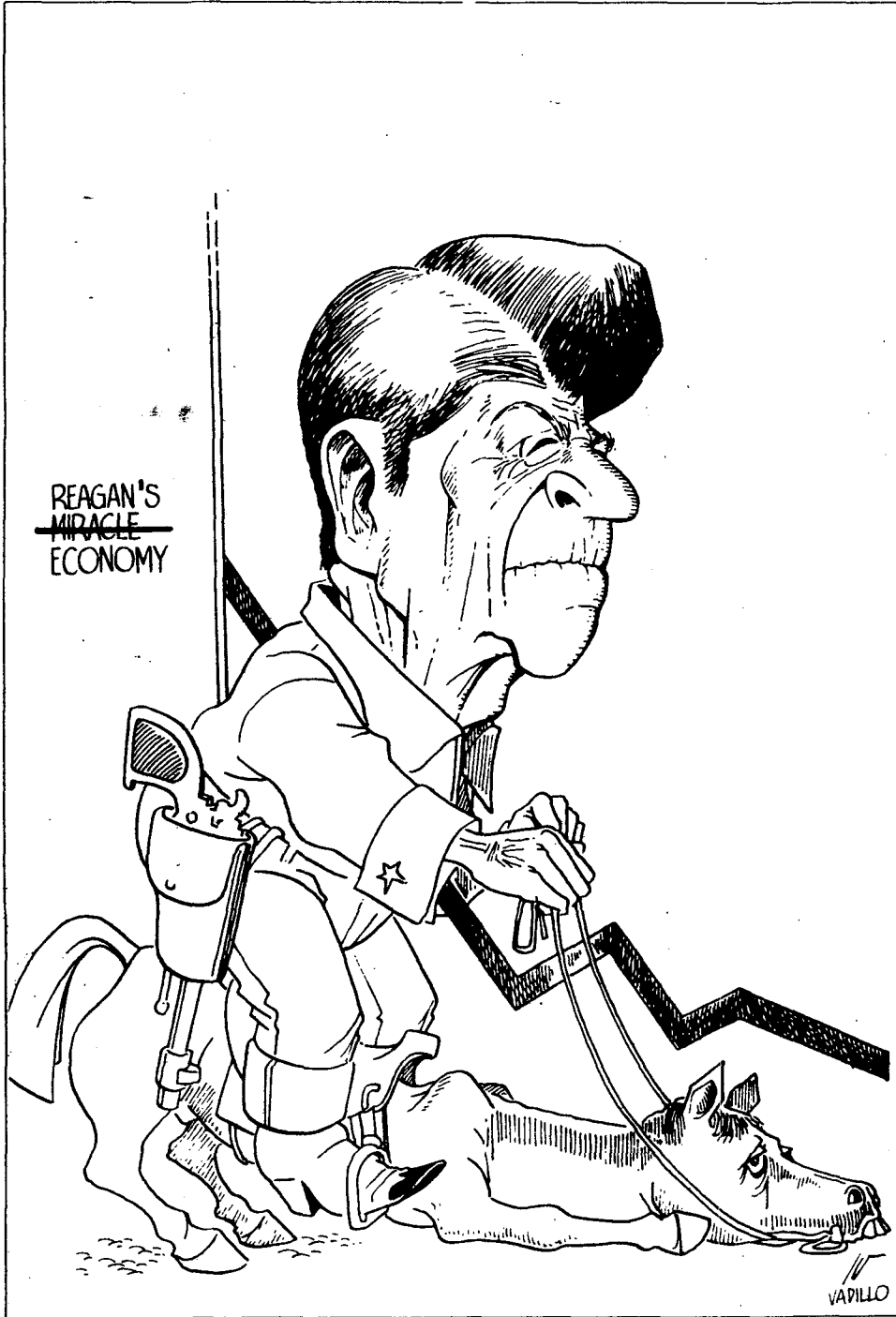
ism, after all, was the only alternative being offered. So the American people chose "anything but Carter."

Given that the choice of Reagan was a choice of policies that had failed long ago, it is no surprise to find Reagan and his policies quickly being rejected by the American people. The problem is that given the prospect of rejecting Reagan, the Democrats offer nothing but the policies and program that created Reagan's opportunity in the first place. A closed circle of despair.

The only positive note in this situation is that Reagan has helped make it possible to pose the real issue in American life. By so openly placing his faith in corporate enterprise as willing and able to "restore our greatness," Reagan has brought out into the open what the somewhat more subtle Democrats have tried to keep under wraps—the responsibility of big business for the condition of our society. Under Carter and his predecessors, Reagan argues disingenuously, government policies brought us to our present state. But under his program of unleashing business initiative, the responsibility is now clearly at the doorstep of corporate enterprise.

In this situation the left, and especially the socialist left, must either assert itself or forget about politics. Supporting the more liberal of the traditional Democrats is no longer enough, because they will not take up the challenge posed by Reagan, but will only hide behind scare stories about the Moral Majority. (This is the tactic of the Democratic National Committee in its recent fund appeal signed by former Senator Frank Church.)

The time has come when it is essential for organizations like the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and left unions like the Machinists, AFSCME and the UAW not only to put forward a coherent program for social investment aimed at securing a peaceful world and a society with full employment, adequate health care, low-cost housing, high quality public education and modern transportation, but also to begin running their own candidates in Democratic primaries for Congress and state legislatures—or, where they have a chance of winning, as independents.



the mid-term congressional election this year. A year ago, and even last summer, administration officials were looking toward increased majorities in the House and Senate. Now, unless the recession ends by summer, they anticipate heavy losses.

And yet one would never know all this by observing the Democrats or the left. Congressional Democrats, including all but the small handful in the Congressional Black Caucus, still seem to be in a state of shock. Liberals, in and out of office, have reacted to Reaganism largely by going quietly along with the majority of Democratic officeholders, whose strategy seems to be to offer only token resistance to Reagan's programs on the theory that with enough rope the presi-

more modern and efficient industries of Germany, Japan and other nations. In a period of stagnation, such as this, it is no longer possible to provide increasing real income to working people and the poor and to maintain high levels of corporate profitability and increasingly high incomes for the wealthy.

That inability left the Carter administration in mid-air—unable to deliver to traditional Democratic constituencies or find ways to restore the economy to health and American power to its former station. The resulting wavering and indecision opened the door to the Reagan conservatives, whose nostalgia for unrestrained corporate freedom to pursue profits had earlier been anathema to the great majority of Americans. Reagan-

But you'd never

suspect that the Democrats had seen the polls.

The American people are ready. A majority of 79 percent would rather have the military budget cut than see reductions in federal aid to the elderly, the poor and the handicapped. Two of three Americans would rather cut military spending than federal aid to education, and almost as many would rather cut arms spending than federal health programs.

The question is whether the left will finally emerge as a coherent force in American political life. The opportunity is all too real. Failure to act now will be nothing but a failure of nerve—one that will doom the American people to a long period of stagnation and decline. ■

LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

BOOKISH

IRVING WEINSTEIN'S "VANGUARD Trap" (ITT, Jan. 13) was distressing. I was gripped with the image of the "right-on" academic Marxist sitting at his desk, all the "right" books and periodicals piled around him, pounding on his typewriter the "right" way to do a revolution. It's a shame his "melancholy thoughts" were inspired only by his reading of Fagen's report. I read the report while living in Nicaragua and found it not wholly satisfying in several areas.

For me it is tacky for a journalist to base his criticism of the Sandinistas on a report from a theoretical scholar. Why not go to the people—the *real* people Marxists are supposed to care about—who suffered through the insurrection and years of repression and *know* who their vanguard is because they fought at their side, were wounded and starved together. Other than the Coordinator of the Reconstruction Government and two or three heads of ministries, the bulk of the leaders of the New Nicaragua spent those anxious years of strife and struggle in exile.

I could go on... Just know: you don't make a revolution reading a book and

you don't build a new society from behind a typewriter. You do both by being with the people and, yes, someone has to be at the front of the line. But in this case the Sandinistas were in front of the line when it meant death from Somoza's U.S.-backed National Guard and what a pity should they be shot down now in their earned leadership by Marxist scholars.

—Georgia Lyga McFadden
Sacramento, Calif.

CULTURAL VANGUARD

PAT AUFDERHEIDE IS RIGHT—REDS makes socialism sexy and patriotic (ITT, Dec. 23). And it's about time. If anything, Pat's fine and careful review understates the importance of this achievement: finally we have a dramatic production that succeeds in humanizing socialists for mass audiences and leftists alike. For this reason alone, *Reds* should be praised and its approach emulated despite its Hollywood budget, trappings and parentage.

While the paucity of attention given to left history by popular culture can be primarily attributed to control of entertainment by private capital, the blame must be shared by the left. We are good at creating artistic works that

appeal to left activists and intellectuals—self-conscious or obscure political theater, film and song—works that are essential to the cultural sustenance of the left. But we have failed to personalize socialism in our art in a way that renders it popular. Instead, we have acceded to melodramatic works based on liberal issues that are offered as the best the left can do in cracking the popular culture market. After *Reds*, we can no longer justifiably assert that socialism is not marketable.

Reds does a beautiful job of reminding us that we were not alone in history when many of us experienced the feelings of camaraderie, collective triumph and revolution in the '60s.

Warren Beatty and Trevor Griffiths have given us a lesson in producing effective socialist art. At Fuse Music we are attempting to approach popular music the same way.

—Mike Rawson
Board of Directors, Fuse Music
Seattle, Wash.

TRADE-OFFS

DAVID MOBERG'S ARTICLE (ITT, DEC. 23) on the Ford plant in Sheffield, Ala., and the General Motors plant in Clark, N.J., raised many of the tough issues that the Local 736 leadership and its members faced in deciding to pursue an employee takeover of the General Motors facility.

However, the local union officials and this law firm, which represented the union throughout these extraordinarily difficult negotiations, were surprised at UAW vice president Martin Gerber's comment that the Clark wage cut was a "direct threat" to the General Motors' contract.

While the former workers, both management and union, did take a 25 percent pay cut, the union instituted a plantwide productivity program. Dur-

ing the first month of the plant's operation, this bonus program resulted in each employee receiving \$130, bringing the majority of the union members' pay cuts to approximately 12.5 percent.

Even more incomprehensible was Gerber's comment about the need for a "quid pro quo," which he did not see at Clark. The quid pro quo negotiated in the Employee Stock Ownership Plan is that not only will the workers own the company, but presently they have three seats out of 13 on the board of directors and will, in less than 10 years, be electing half of the board of directors.

In the last few months of the new company under the ESOP there has been an increasing drive for democracy in decision making throughout the plant. The union has never been stronger. Productivity and quality are both far above that experienced under General Motors because of the gains made by the workers.

—Craig H. Livingston
Newark, N.J.

ON TARGET

CONGRATULATIONS ON DAVID OST'S on-target piece on Poland. Ost called the shots brilliantly and precisely, as the events of December have showed.

Ost's analysis of the situation told me more about the present and future of the struggle there than the reams of copy I've been reading in the daily papers.

Reading *In These Times* renews my faith weekly not only that socialist thinking is solid but that socialist reporting is the most consistently useful for people learning to struggle.

—Christopher Garlock
Managing Editor, Rochester Patriot
Rochester, N.Y.

By Jack Colhoun

"EUPHORIC ENTHUSIASM for arms control is indeed a dangerous drug, an escape from reality," Eugene Rostow recently told a New York audience.

As head of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), Rostow was not merely voicing an opinion, but rather spelling out the Reagan Administration's attitude toward nuclear arms negotiations with the Soviet Union. Talks in Geneva focusing on European-based missiles resumed this month after a December recess. Negotiations on the limitation of strategic atomic arms are likely to start in a few months.

If past statements by the principal American arms control negotiators are a measure by which to predict how they will bargain in Geneva, the going will be slow. The administration appears prepared to build up U.S. military strength in order to regain nuclear superiority over the Soviets, then bargain from a position of strength, if at all.

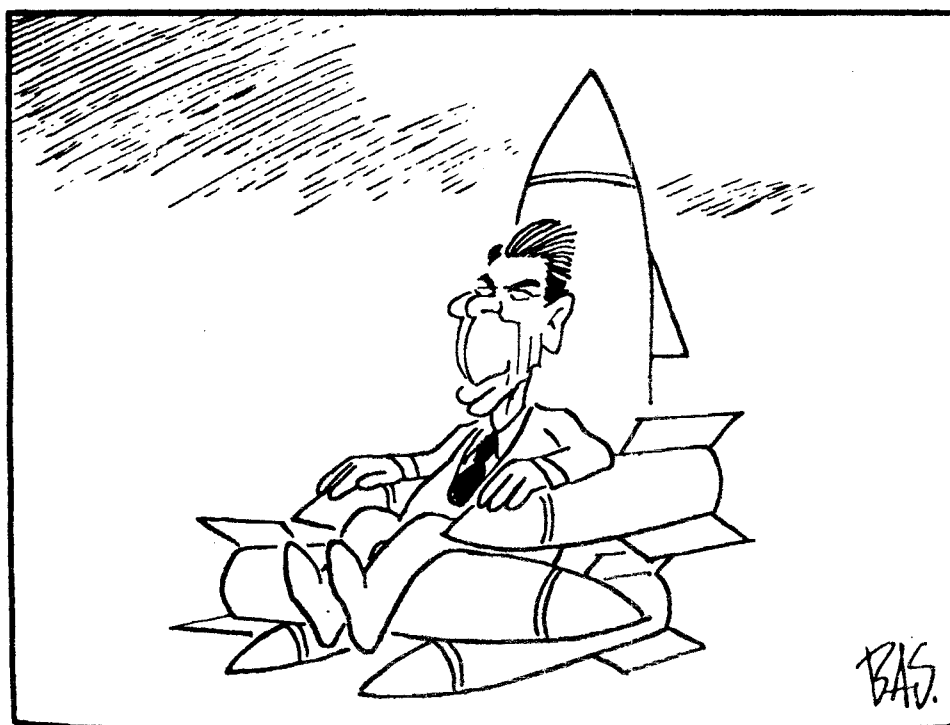
Last summer chief strategic arms negotiator Edward Rowny told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) the Soviet Union had gained strategic superiority in late 1980 or early 1981. The retired Army lieutenant general stressed, "Redressing the strategic balance is essential for our security and as a base from which to negotiate sound arms control agreements." Rowny is the first top administration official to assert outright that the Soviets had already gained strategic superiority.

Rowny declared, "No agreement we sign should even sanction a Soviet buildup in strategic capabilities." But he also stated, "A good agreement should permit us to restore the credibility of our strategic deterrent."

According to Rostow, the first step toward reaching an arms control agreement is "launching a program to rebuild America's defenses. Without that decision, nothing else can be accomplished." Rostow told the SFRC if the U.S. failed to rearm, "the paralyzing specter of Soviet military superiority could prevent us

PERSPECTIVES

Where the leaders sit on arms control



from defending our national interest with force if diplomacy and deterrence fail. In short, we could be exposed to nuclear blackmail."

The former Yale Law School dean proposed to link arms control with the policy of containment and Soviet international behavior. If the Soviet Union does not act internationally according to U.S. standards, containment, not an arms control pact, will be Washington's response. Containment was the post-World War II policy, shattered by the Vietnam War, in which the U.S. played an aggressive global role countering third world

national liberation movements in the name of "containing Soviet expansionism."

"Arms control agreements could result in a somewhat more stable environment, at least in restraining the potential escalation of conventional force conflicts," Rostow testified, but he added that "under contemporary circumstances that is an insufficient goal and probably an illusory one."

Explaining that strategic superiority is the key factor enabling the U.S. to restore order to an increasingly turbulent third world, Rostow argued that "the nuclear weapon is a pervasive influence

in all aspects of diplomacy and of conventional war, and in that crisis we could go forward in planning the use of our conventional forces with great freedom precisely because we knew the Soviet Union could not escalate beyond the local level."

Dr. Jeremy Stone, of the Federation of American Scientists, testifying in opposition to Rostow's confirmation as ACDA director, said that Rostow's goal in arms control negotiations "is a strategic force, which he believes we do not now have." On this basis, Stone warned that "arms control negotiations could become cold war diplomacy."

Paul Nitze is the principal U.S. negotiator for the Geneva talks on European-based missiles. The *New York Times* wrote recently, "Nitze's career as a maker and critic of foreign policy has spanned the entire period of the cold war and, as an unrelenting hardliner for all of that era, Mr. Nitze has at regular intervals warned that the U.S. was entering a period of maximum danger from the Soviet Union, requiring vast rearmament."

Nitze was the chief author of the landmark National Security Council Memorandum-68 written in early 1950, which called for a huge increase in the Pentagon budget from about \$14 billion to the range of \$50 billion annually. NSC-68 became the blueprint for the military buildup backing up the post-World War II containment policy. After the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S. embarked on a vast rearmament program, boosting military spending over the \$50 billion mark during the early '50s.

Writing in the fall 1980 *Foreign Affairs*, Nitze argued, "Providing for the common defense now requires the kind of priority that it had in 1950...." Nitze added the new Pershing II and Cruise missiles, scheduled to be stationed in Western Europe starting in 1983, must be deployed.

What Stone warned the senators regarding Rowny can also be applied to Nitze and Rostow: "Left to his own devices, Gen. Rowny would not...reach agreement with the Soviet Union because of the excessively hard bargain he would attempt to drive."

Jack Colhoun, an anti-war activist, is a historian specializing in post-World War II U.S. foreign and military policy.



'WHY, NONSENSE, I'M SURE HE'LL BE CAREFUL PLAYING WITH YOUR TOYS!'

PERSPECTIVES

Reducing waste wasn't the object

By Karl Frieden

RONALD REAGAN CATA-pulted to the Presidency using big government as a whipping boy. On issues such as nuclear proliferation and civil rights, his positions may have lacked clarity, but his distaste for government could not be doubted. In a radio broadcast in April 1978, Reagan asked: "Can anyone honestly believe that we can't find 12 percent fat in the federal budget? The government spends usually counter-attack by saying, 'Which program would you eliminate?' What if we reply, don't eliminate any (although there are plenty we can do without), just make every department, every bureau, agency and program reduce its expenditures by 12 percent."

Yet since entering office, President Reagan has treated government waste as a malady infecting programs like school lunches and public works, which he opposes, but not others like the military establishment and subsidies for business, which he supports. The suspicion grows that the president has been less interested in rooting out government waste than in disassembling government that works too well—achieving goals he considers inappropriate.

The fiscal 1982 budget cuts were rushed through Congress in record speed. The Senate took only four weeks to re-vamp 30 years of social legislation almost overnight. Two hundred and fifty programs were considered by both houses with scant deliberation, debate or hearings. Only rarely were administration officials compelled to explain what was wrong with old programs and what wasteful elements were to be eliminated.

The favored approach for imposing austerity on social welfare has been to lump categorical programs into block grants and then reduce appropriations by a flat percentage. But spending caps and across-the-board reductions are crude and needlessly cruel ways to eliminate services. In no way are they related to improving productivity or reducing waste, fraud or government abuse. For all the hoopla about the bloated Wash-

ington bureaucracy, the Reagan budget cuts initially eliminated only 4,500 jobs in the capital, little more than 1 percent of the local federal work force.

A second strategy has been to leave legislative protections and regulatory agency responsibilities intact while dismantling or substantially weakening agency enforcement capabilities. This deliberate circumvention of Congressional intent is as inefficient as it is pernicious.

While making simplistic cuts in spending levels and enforcement powers, more rational approaches to reducing the escalating costs of government have been ignored. The Medicaid program, which provides low income families with health care protection, was slashed by about \$1 billion. No effort was made to impose cost controls on the spiraling prices of the private health care industry—doctors, hospitals, drug companies and third party insurers. In fact, the one government cost control program, the Health Planning System, was scuttled.

Similarly, the removal of one million recipients from the food stamp rolls and the reduction in benefits for another million reflects the administration's preference for finding waste among recipients who fattened themselves on benefits of 43 cents a meal, instead of moving aggressively against the real sources of spiraling costs: unemployment, which added more people to the rolls, and inflation in food prices, which, along with energy price increases, fueled two-digit inflation.

Administration goals other than improving government efficiency are equally apparent in the benign neglect of waste in programs still in favor. The military-industrial complex, coddled by government-guaranteed economic security and profits, has consistently compiled a record of majestic cost overruns unmatched by any other federal agency. The General Accounting Office has estimated Pentagon waste at \$10 to \$15 billion a year, more than enough to restore one-third of the social program cutbacks.

In April 1981, David Stockman, director of the Office of Management and Budget, told Congress, "There's so much waste in the Defense Department its taken us a little longer to figure it

out." Apparently the Reagan administration is still trying.

The modern-day Scrooges in the White House do not apply to the military the same methods used to reduce spending in social programs. For instance, the Defense Department estimates that the U.S. is currently spending half its total military budget for forces formally committed to NATO. Why not eliminate this huge bureaucracy and give the money directly to Europe as a block grant (less 25 percent) so that our allies could purchase their own armies?

As an alternative a means test could be adopted for military spending. The U.S. spends 6 percent of its GNP on defense, while our 14 NATO allies spend an average of only 3 percent of GNP. This ratio is unfair. Many of the European nations are richer than the U.S. (as measured by per capita GNP). Requiring the NATO allies to contribute more to their own defense would save Americans tens of billions of dollars.

Or better yet, just declare the Pentagon bankrupt, as the administration has implicitly done with the Social Security system, thus clearing the way for extreme reform measures. If the Social Security system is deemed bankrupt because current expenditures will soon outpace revenues from the Social Security tax, then the military is bankrupt because the expansion of defense spending will require government budget expenditures to exceed tax revenues, leaving a sizable deficit.

There are certainly more refined methods available for eliminating waste, but no more so for the military than for social programs. It has become clear, however, that the Reagan administration would rather just throw money at military problems. By expanding the one sector of the economy totally dependent upon government, and sacrificing consumer goods for the arms race, the U.S. may achieve an unintended parity with the Soviet Union.

Along with defense, several other business-oriented programs have continued their charmed existences under this administration. The funding of the nuclear breeder reactor program has been increased, on the heels of a recent Congressional study lambasting the project for cost overruns of 450 percent and contract language lacking "binding provisions for cost, schedule, or specific technical performance."

The Reagan administration has also been particularly lax with tax expenditures—government spending through special exemptions, exclusions, deduc-

tions and credits in the tax code to benefit certain classes of taxpayers. In fiscal 1981 tax expenditures totalled approximately \$230 billion, equal to 35 percent of direct federal spending. Under the Reagan administration, tax expenditures will more than double, totalling nearly 50 percent of direct government spending by 1985.

Tax expenditures tend to be inefficient in at least three ways. First, the amount of a tax expenditure is not subject to limitation by Congress, but depends entirely upon a taxpayer's response to a particular incentive. In this regard tax spending parallels the so-called "uncontrollables" in the federal budget—programs that have no spending ceiling.

Second, tax expenditures are often so loosely designed as to be counterproductive. For instance, the new Reagan tax package increases the capital gains exclusion—the percentage of investment income exempt from tax. Yet this deduction is not limited to productive investment in new plant and equipment but applies equally as well to paintings, diamonds, antiques, guitars, first homes, second homes and a host of other non-productive investments. Since non-productive speculative investments typically pay off sooner than productive investments, the net effect of more liberalized capital gains deductions is to accelerate the flow of funds away from productive investments.

Third, tax expenditures frequently reward taxpayers for doing what they would have done without a special incentive. For instance, a recent GAO study could find little evidence that some \$19 billion in investment tax credits actually resulted in investment or productivity gains that would not have occurred anyway.

This is not to say that the Reagan economic program has been totally without merit in encouraging efficiency in government. There have been reductions in unduly large subsidies like the dairy price supports and synthetic fuel development loan guarantees staunchly defended by special interests. There has been a change in certain paperwork requirements and regulations that needlessly hamper business operations.

For the most part, however, the Reagan program was not intended to reduce waste in government. Perhaps displaying its own unique sense of fairness, the Reagan administration has violated the principles of sound management without discrimination. The budget cuts have focused not only on the most wasteful or useless programs but on those favorable to working people and the poor. The re-

Why not declare the Pentagon bankrupt, and clear the way for real reform?

design of policies has regularly disregarded obvious and prudent economies. The administration has sought to weaken the protections afforded by the Freedom of Information Act instead of insuring that information will be available to the public as a check on bureaucratic capriciousness. Public service has been denigrated and private employment exalted, causing widespread demoralization among public employees.

National opinion polls have shown that Americans are not so much concerned with the overall tax burden as with how their taxes are being used. There is certainly much that government has to answer for in terms of efficiency and accountability. Americans have the right to demand that the public sector perform its functions with more dispatch, more frugality and more kindness. What is achievable by government must be tempered by experience and what the nation can afford in a slow growth era. But the Reagan administration's hypocritical approach only obfuscates real problems.

Karl Frieden is an associate for the National Center for Economic Alternatives.

SCHOOLING

A textbook case of running in place

"Both Chicago in itself and the entire Chicago metropolitan area have the most highly segregated public schools of any large metropolitan area in the country."

Integration in Chicago
Technical Assistance Committee
Illinois State Board of Education
May 11, 1978

"Chicago school officials have intentionally created and maintained a racially discriminatory, dual school system."

Office of Civil Rights, HEW
April 9, 1979

By Norm Fruchter

CHICAGO'S SCHOOLS HAVE been both separate and unequal since 1920. In 1979, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, which had consistently rejected Chicago requests for federal desegregation funds, finally asked the Justice Department to consider filing suit against the city for maintaining "a racially discriminatory, dual school system." In April 1980, the Justice Department decided that there were grounds for suit, but it offered Chicago a chance to negotiate a settlement.

Suddenly, a changed political climate suggested the possibility of improved education for Chicago's schoolchildren. Mayor Jane Byrne, an anti-organization candidate elected with extensive minority support, had appointed 10 new members to the School Board, creating a mix of five blacks, three Hispanics and three whites. The Board immediately formed a Committee on Student Desegregation headed by Prof. Joyce Hughes of the Northwestern University Law School. Under her stewardship, a consent decree between the Justice Department and the Chicago Board was filed with U.S. District Court Judge Milton Shadur on Sept. 24, 1980.

The consent decree committed the Board to establish "the greatest practicable number of stably desegregated schools, considering all the circumstances in Chicago." The Board was to "provide educational and related programs for any black or Hispanic schools remaining isolated," in order to "alleviate the effects of both past and ongoing segregation." The decree listed a variety of voluntary and mandatory techniques, short of busing, to reduce Chicago's segregation, but stipulated that busing, "at Board expense, will be included to insure success of the plan to the extent that other techniques are insufficient."

The consent decree was heralded as the start of a new era. Mayor Byrne and other leading politicians endorsed it. Even George Schmidt, one of the school system's most astute, informed and persistent critics, was optimistic. In the October issue of *Substance*, the journal of Substitutes United for Better Schools, Schmidt suggested that "for the first time, the Chicago Board of Education is composed of people who really believe that the majority of the children in the city can be educated and further believes that its job is to see that education happens."

Not so fast.

But the hardest work was ahead. The Board had six months to translate the decree's principles into detailed plans and submit them to Judge Shadur for approval. The crucial question facing the Board was how much desegregation was politically "practicable." Everyone agreed that an educational improvement program was essential. But how many schools could be desegregated in a school

system 60 percent black, 20 percent Hispanic and 18 percent white? Suppose, using sophisticated demographic techniques, a significant number of schools could be desegregated. Given the measures necessary to achieve it (boundary changes, school pairings, student reassignment, extensive busing), how much of such desegregation was desirable?

The Board had several choices: an extensive desegregation effort; a modest desegregation effort combined with a strong improvement program for segregated schools; or a system-wide improvement program combined with a weak desegregation effort. In Chicago, the NAACP, the Urban League and the Citizens Schools Committee (CSC), an independent public interest organization, pushed for the first option. They argued that anything short of maximum desegregation would violate *Brown v. Board of Education* and the 14th Amendment.

The third position has been advocated nationally by an increasing number of black leaders. "Black children can learn in all-black schools," Derrick Bell argued in *The Black Scholar*. "Black parents need to consider more carefully than many do before accepting opportunities to bus their children to mainly white schools, simply because the schools are white." As Ronald Edmonds has consistently pointed out, "...specific issues of demographic desegregation deserve a lower priority when the subject is effective teaching and learning for the children of the poor." The real goal should be the educational improvement of all schools serving minority children.

The Chicago Board did not itself make a choice, but to formulate their plans they hired a team of experts who advocated the third solution—educational improvement rather than "demographic desegregation." The Board's team was led by Dr. Robert Green, a nationally-renowned expert in NAACP desegregation cases, and Prof. Ronald Edmonds, one of the leading advocates of the use of effective schools research to improve minority schools. The consultants developed two plans, *Recommendations on Educational Components*, submitted to Judge Shadur in mid-April 1981, and

ments, no specific plan of implementation to which the Board was responsible. Worse, the school system was being decimated by a financial crisis, yet there were no provisions for the considerable funding such an improvement program would require. "We thought the *Educational Components* were admirable as suggestions, but at best they were only a plan to make a plan," argued Hank Rubin, CSC's director. But if the *Educational Components* were only suggestions, what would happen once the consultants returned to their universities and the Chicago school bureaucracy began to implement their recommendations?

The *Student Assignment Principles* defined a very weak desegregation effort. The plan defined a "stably desegregated school" as having a 30 percent white or minority enrollment. It adopted a timetable using voluntary desegregating techniques in 1981-82; voluntary and mandatory techniques, excluding busing, in 1982-83; some minimal busing in 1983-84. (Previous Boards had projected that white enrollment would decline to less than 10 percent city-wide by 1986.) Schools more than 70 percent white would be required to reduce their white enrollment to the 70 percent limit by the fall of 1983.

Using very conservative measures, CSC estimated that more than 350 of Chicago's 559 schools would remain overwhelmingly black and Hispanic under this plan. White enrollment would be reduced in approximately 80 predominantly white schools. Some indeterminate number of the remaining 130 schools (many of which were already desegregated, given the plan's formula), would become targets for boundary changes, pairings and conversion to magnet schools. At best, barely a third of Chicago's schools might be affected; the overwhelming majority would remain segregated.

When the Board finally passed this minimal desegregation plan in April 1981, all five black board members voted against it. The minority-liberal coalition that had elected Mayor Byrne and negotiated the consent decree had disintegrated, victim of a resumption of Chicago's traditional ethnic politics. A developing schism between blacks and Hispanics over the formulas for distributing Title I funds was aggravated by a black community campaign to appoint Manfred Byrd, then Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, General Superintendent. Though the entire Board was committed to appointing a black superintendent, the black Board members and most segments of the black community wanted a local candidate with an established political base. But the Chicago business community lobbied effectively for an outsider, and after Hispanic Board members joined the whites, Ruth Love from the Oakland, Calif., school system was chosen.

The same voting pattern approved the Board's weak desegregation effort, but the black members of the Board already knew they were doomed to isolation. In March, Mayor Byrne designated two white anti-desegregation activists to replace the two black members whose terms would soon expire. From initial support for the consent decree, the Mayor moved to increasing opposition to desegregation as she consolidated her ties with traditional Democratic Party constituencies. Political shifts among some of the other initial Board consent decree supporters paralleled the Mayor's realignment. "I'm extremely disappointed in my colleagues," says Prof. Hughes, "because they knew what they were voting for when they supported the consent decree. Knowing what I know now, I'd never put my credibility and integrity on the line for that group of people."

Little more than a year has passed since the consent decree was signed, and hopes for school improvement in Chicago are fading. Since the Reagan Justice Department will undoubtedly insure that its Chicago representative will not

Continued on page 22



Hopes for improving Chicago's schools (pictured, students at LaSalle Elementary School) have faded in the past year.

Maintenance of large numbers of segregated schools would continue to reproduce an illegal "separate but equal" system. Even if equality were somehow achieved, the results would be damaging to both blacks and whites. "Quality education cannot exist in Chicago," the CSC brief to Judge Shadur argued, "in the absence of classroom opportunities to live and learn with students from the range of ethnic and racial groups comprising the pluralistic city."

The second option was clearly a compromise. The consent decree could be read as advocating a mix of moderate desegregation and school improvement, and the Supreme Court's *Milliken II* decision in Detroit was repeatedly cited as a viable precedent. Many observers expected the Board to choose this option.

Student Assignment Principles, submitted, after much controversy, two weeks later.

The paper plan.

Educational Components, a comprehensive indictment of the Chicago system, verified the charges critics had been making for years about systemic failures in curriculum, instruction, student assignment, assessment for Special Education, bilingual education and within-school segregation. Its recommendations read like everyone's wish list for school improvement: high academic standards, concise educational outcomes, timeliness, curriculum reassessment, staff development, parent education—a cornucopia of school betterment measures.

But there were no details, no commit-

INPRINT

SOCIAL UNREST

The racism behind the rioting

Race and Class: "Britain '81: Rebellion and Repression"
XXII, 2/3, 141 pp., \$3.50

By Hazel V. Carby

A sense of history has been lacking in analyses of the rebellions in Britain last summer. Britain has a long history of the rebellion and repression of its black population, and that history can be found in this special issue of *Race and Class*.

"Britain is a profoundly racist society": the opening sentence of the editorial dispenses any lingering romanticism about traditions of British liberalism or the fair play of the British sense of justice. The recurring theme is of the increasing authoritarianism of the state, supported not by the friendly "bobby" but by the racist "blues." The rebellion of black youth is a response to this institutionalized racism, supported and perpetuated by the police.

"Blacks" is not the modern equivalent for Negro. It is how "Afro-Caribbeans and Asians, particularly the young, choose to describe themselves" as it expresses their common experience of racism. The first article, by A. Sivanandan, outlines the history of the organizations Asians and West Indians formed against the racism they encountered when they arrived in Britain as immigrant labor. Sivanandan carefully traces both individual and collective forms of resistance and grounds them in the traditions that both groups brought with them. The connections made between colonialism, imperialism and racism were crucial in founding coordinated campaigns from the Pan-African Federation to the Indian Workers Associations.

Sivanandan documents the formation of organizations around every aspect of institutionalized racism—housing, schooling, immigration control legislation and the work-place. Internationally, he examines the influence of the politics and political organizations of "home" countries as well as the effects of black nationalism and the Black Power struggles in the U.S. In the middle of the '70s, Sivanandan argues, youth emerged as "the vanguard of the black struggle." The establishment of black women's groups in the '70s culminated in the formation of the Organization of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD), a national-linked organization of autonomous groups in black communities.

This growth of black community organization is interwoven with the history of increasing state racism, the growth of fascist groups and the inability of the white left and trade unions to develop anti-racist strategies. Sivanandan describes Britain today as becoming a "pass-law" society: the new Nationality Bill creates classes of citizenship, and black citizens need a passport to get the shrinking services of the welfare state. Black youth, Sivanandan concludes, are "not the unemployed, but the never employed.... Theirs is a

different hunger—a hunger to retain the freedom, the lifestyle, the dignity which they have carved out from the stone of their lives." The police represent "an army of occupation."

Police spies.

In another article, Tony Bunyan places the immediate cause of the "riots" "at the door of years of aggressive policing policies." Bunyan provides a comprehensive

As the black unemployed increase, so do policing tactics.



London police restrain marchers protesting a fire that was widely seen as a racist act.

history of the coercive agencies of the British state, especially the police.

He describes the two major policing strategies in mainland Britain today: reactive or "fire-brigade" tactics of special units like the Special Patrol Group (SPG); and the preventive strategy called "community policing," with an emphasis on information-gathering and intelligence systems. Given the running down of industry and high unemployment, Bunyan concludes that Britain is entering a "period of greater repression—and resistance."

Lee Bridges analyzes the re-

sults of structural unemployment and assesses policies and programs of "containment directed at the least unionized, increasingly dis-employed white and black residents of the inner-cities." He also examines community policing projects and experiments that have been advocated as positive alternatives to the use of special units like the SPG and finds that they are complementary. Community policing is a model for forms of local police states.

Louis Kushnick explores the responses in the U.S. to the ghetto uprisings of the '60s as "an important body of data that can

illuminate the range of choices open to the British state."

Kushnick sees common patterns of harassment and invasion in both societies. A detailed account of the notorious "Sus" laws explains the procedures used to arrest blacks either for "acting suspiciously" or "on suspicion" of being an illegal immigrant.

Kushnick's conclusions are bleak: "ideological disarray" among liberals in the U.S., where

"race" is an unfashionable subject, and Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley's solution for "losers": a "24-hour-a-day controlled environment for uncooperated members of the underclass." Is William Whitelaw's use of army camps as prisons for Britain's rebellious youth precisely this type of controlled environment?

Listen harder.

Perhaps the most complex article is the last: Paul Gilroy argues that Marxist theory "has been at best 'race blind' and at worst eurocentric." He states that there can be no "general theory of 'race' or 'race relations'"; spe-

cific forms of racism have to be analyzed in specific social formations under particular historical conditions. The British left, he claims, has been unaffected by the black dialogue with Marxism to be found in the work of Garvey, Padmore, James and Wright, preferring to subsume black struggles under those of the working class.

Gilroy argues that "race is the modality in which class is lived." Since culture is a terrain of class conflicts, cultures of resistance are "one aspect of the struggle against capitalist domination which blacks experience as racial oppression. This is a class struggle in and through race." Gilroy feels it imperative that the "boundaries of the concept 'class struggle'" be re-drawn to include "the relentless processes by which classes are constituted—organized and disorganized—in politics, as well as the struggles between them, once formed." He uses a concept of community to reveal the "ties between the struggles of blacks outside the workplace and those who remain within the wage relation" and explores the class character of black cultural struggles in Britain.

It is a pity to have to bewail the absences in such a well organized, informative and thought provoking collection of essays but the black woman's voice is not heard, although many of the contributors obviously are aware of the existence of a black feminist voice emerging from autonomous black women's organizations. Understanding the position of black women is crucial to an understanding of the workings of racist ideologies that describe the black family as pathological; it is central to any attempt to link workplace and community; and it is integral to any understanding of resistance to institutionalized racism.

Hazel V. Carby lectures in the Afro-American Studies Program at Yale University. A black feminist and member of OWAAD, she is co-author of *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in '70s Britain*, (in press) CCCS/Hutchinson, 1982.

NUCLEAR POWER

Garbage for a million years

A Critique of Pure Risk: Radioactive Wastes from Nuclear Power Plants

By Thomas B. Johansson and Peter Steen
University of California Press,
197 pp., \$15.95

By Robert Andersen

Friends and foes of nuclear power alike have, for the most part, kept their attention riveted on the integrity of the reactor containment vessel, that is, on the "front end"—with a 20-30 year time-frame—of the nuclear power cycle. The "back end"—or, as the industry prefers, the "waste management" segment—of the cycle concerns itself with cooling ponds, glass-leaching rates, groundwater transport, geological formations—with a mosaic of natural and man-made phenomena within a time-frame easily more than a million years.

As this unassuming book

makes clear, the disproportionate risks inherent in the back end demand a reorientation of the scope of public debate. After all, it is not entirely inconceivable that the Seabrooks and Diablo Canyons can operate accident-and-sabotage free for 30 years. But can the fissionate and actinide wastes generated at those plants be prevented from seeping back into human history once consigned to the earth? The scientific evidence presented in this compelling study is damning.

In 1977 the Swedish government undertook the first comprehensive review of the state of the art of "waste management." The occasion was the application by the Swedish State Power Board to load and operate the third Ringhals reactor. Under the terms of the newly enacted Nuclear Stipulation Act, the nuclear industry was required to submit a report detailing its proposed method of waste disposal for Ringhals 3. Among other cri-

teria, the Act obliged the industry to explain "how" and "where" those wastes could be handled and stored in an "absolutely safe" manner.

Under great pressure from the anti-nuclear movement, and itself hopelessly divided, the government took the unprecedented step of inviting an international review of the industry's compliance with the Act. The findings are here ably summarized in an enlarged, updated version of a report by the authors to the Minister of Energy. The much-heralded Swedish "solution" to the waste problem—vitrification encapsulated inside lead-and-titanium and deposited in permanent storage 500 meters deep in bedrock—turned out to amount to an act of faith.

The authors expose gaping uncertainties in the current state of knowledge. Little enough is known about the short-term behavior of crucial processes, let alone that of their interrelationships or their disposition under the stress of eons. The time-horizon of the back-end renders absurd any pretension to scientific predictability, much less to "absolute safety." Even the geology of stable formations comes unglued under the pressure of accounting for itself for a million years. The many experts the authors quote in their brisk survey of testimony agree on only one thing: the existence of an accep-

This Swedish reactor was the TMI of nuclear waste management.

table site has not been proved. The only way, the authors say, the earth could be turned into a containment vessel would be if one were capable of dictating the conditions of natural and human history for the next million years. And the nuclear industry is singularly ill-equipped to entertain that prospect.

It is the great virtue of this surprisingly accessible survey that the authors never stray from the technocratic pale. That lends their analysis all the more weight and underscores finally just how much the industry depends on a political fix as opposed to a technical rationale. Ringhals 3, it turns out, is the Three Mile Island of the back end. It played a considerable part in the 1980 referendum to halt the Swedish nuclear program, once the world's most ambitious.

Robert Andersen is a visiting scholar at the Hastings Center at Portsmouth, N.H., and is working on a book about atomic scientists.



The political violence of Central America may come to haunt Americans the way Vietnam haunts Stone's characters.

FICTION

No longer innocent abroad

A Flag for Sunrise
By Robert Stone
Knopf, 439 pp., \$13.95

By Paul Skenazy

Like Robert Stone's earlier novels, *A Hall of Mirrors* and *Dog Soldiers*, *A Flag for Sunrise* works contemporary, even modish material. Stone has become something of a cultural witness. He has explored the zeals of religious fanaticism and the vision and vagrancy of drugs. He has found his way to the fronts and back alleys of Vietnam and his new novel gets its motive from his travels in Central America.

A Flag for Sunrise takes place in Tecan, a state with hints of the geography and turmoil of Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. At a failed Catholic mission are Father Egan, a wasted priest who survives on drink and visions, and Sister Justin, a young nurse whose confidence in her calling is crumbling. Out of her disordered and frustrated dreams and her social idealism, she becomes passionately, if obscurely and confusedly, linked to

Stone's lost expatriates are haunted by the search for meaning.

the populist forces.

While Justin awaits her chance to serve and Father Egan awaits his death, Frank Holliwell, an American anthropologist, drunkenly and against all scruples travels to Tecan. Although he rejects a CIA invitation to spy on the mission's suspect inhabitants he does so anyway, feeling his way into complicity through what he calls love, for Justin.

Finally there is Pablo, an American deserter who lives on speed and growing intimations of a "kinship of the blood" with Latin America through his mother's Spanish and Indian past. Pablo most fears being "turned around"—turned into a device of others' pleasures, befuddled,

used. His only interior direction is a murderous paranoia; his egomania is homicidal and also a groping toward religious meaning and self-justification. "What do you think is the use of me?" he asks, just before he unwittingly entangles himself in Tecan's revolution.

From Holliwell's tired, frustrated liberalism to Pablo's avenging rage, these and other characters suggest America's relations to third world realities. America is ubiquitous in Tecan—Coca-Cola bottles and homeless hippies, fashions, endless drink and drugs and other comforting lusts; the tourists, the spies, the newsmen; the arms, the tactics of control and inspection. Vietnam hangs like a shroud over the action. It is the experience so many of these people share, remember and recognize in each other.

America is also, "in the long run," the loser, though anyone's victory is pyrrhic: "Popular wars, thrilling as they might be to radicals, were quite as shitty as everything else." Such is the wisdom offered by veterans like Holliwell.

But it is a limited view, a view from above, from without. This is a book about spiritual, not physical hungers. The characters seek redemption, not democracy. For all the dropped Spanish phrases, this is a landscape and politics of the soul, as Holliwell announces when he boards a plane south, smelling the first odors of "a world far from God."

Search for the self.

Sunrise is in an expatriate American literary tradition of aggrandizement. Stone invades the territories of history and politics to fill a metaphysical museum. Expatriates, in literature, leave the U.S. to buy their way out of themselves. The buying here is in emotional coin, but the question is still what one can take home as souvenir, reward and symbol of renewal. Pablo, Holliwell and Justin are looking for prizes in the "other" world of

Tecan under the "raw, mindless sky," in an imagined treasure trove of life more real, because still peopled by hope.

Near the end of the novel, Holliwell realizes that "he was alone and lost, in outer darkness without friend or faction. It was a frightening place—the point he had been working toward since the day he had come south. It was his natural, his self-appointed place." He, and behind him Stone, goes south after some selfhood that has slipped below the northern consciousness.

Although history is, literally, the last word of this novel, it comes freighted with ironies, intended and not. For all of Stone's deployment of Central American political reality, *A Flag for Sunrise* is ahistorical, an effort to find meaning within time that might bypass the times.

There is, for example, Stone's description of an ancient religious site where "every single stroke represented human sacrifice—even the graffiti. It was as though there was no everyday life. Only sacrifice." This is not cultural history, but self-revela-

tion. The site is Stone's territory, and Stone's religion, and Stone's graveyard of meaning, not necessarily Central America's. His essential question is simple, profound, timeless: "Now, why, Jesus...why in the fucking fire do you run it this way?" But to ask like this is to fail to understand other questions, directed to less distant, more vulnerable authorities.

The author's needs.

Late in the novel, someone wonders if he will ever realize "the diagram of events toward which the life of adventure was propelling him." He does, in his way; a shock of recognition, if not of revelation, is the award Stone bestows. But we read too aware of the firm, if desperate hand of the narrator, the shaping fictional god, to whose greed for significance character and scene are sacrificed. There is the already classic sequence, for example, when Holliwell goes diving along the dangerous edge of a reef, going down too far, and suddenly, on the return, feeling the terror of a presence, a revelation and vulnerability that freezes the surrounding fish for a moment in an homage of immobility. Such passages are the equal of any writer I know, and are only barely diminished by Stone's obsessive need to return to them, to milk more meaning from the words "deep" and "reef" than anyone has a right to. There are scenes of almost equal intensity throughout the novel. But Holliwell's dive, in multiple forms, is all Stone provides.

Father Egan at one point remembers the woman crying at the tomb "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." So it is with the mourning of the characters in *A Flag for Sunrise*. So the quest to find Him, or him, or it: "If you can't find it you have to believe in it. If you can't believe in it you have to hope you will. If you can't hope then all you can do is love the idea of it." It is from this desperate need to find, believe, hope or at least love that Stone writes, and it is within this passion that his characters live.

Stone is forever asking the big questions. He asks them impressively, from the shock of betrayal, from the blight of despair, and with the star-struck innocence of a child confronting a first moment of misery or uncertainty. But history, for him, gives way to apocalypse, that self-serving vision that makes civilization coincident with one's private disasters.

Paul Skenazy teaches English literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

CULTURE SHOCK



MODERN AESTHETICS

At a video festival sponsored by the American Film Institute a CBS TV producer addressed the question of aesthetics in news programming. "A pretty girl talking with solid info is

the best you can do," he said.

KENTUCKY FRIED GOSPEL

Both Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson (*The 700 Club*) are planning to open branches nationwide to cut down on the "revolving door congregations" that plague TV ministers.

CORPSE AS CONSUMER

A California undertaker offers clients coffin linings of either

silk or synthetic material, but discourages the synthetic, because it can irritate the skin.

MASS TRANSIT, REAGAN STYLE

American Express advertises luxury transcontinental rail service that recalls "a time when private railroad cars were reserved for the elite and the privileged."

Who Really Runs New York?

The Permanent Government

by Jack Newfield and Paul Du Brul
Introduction by Ralph Nader

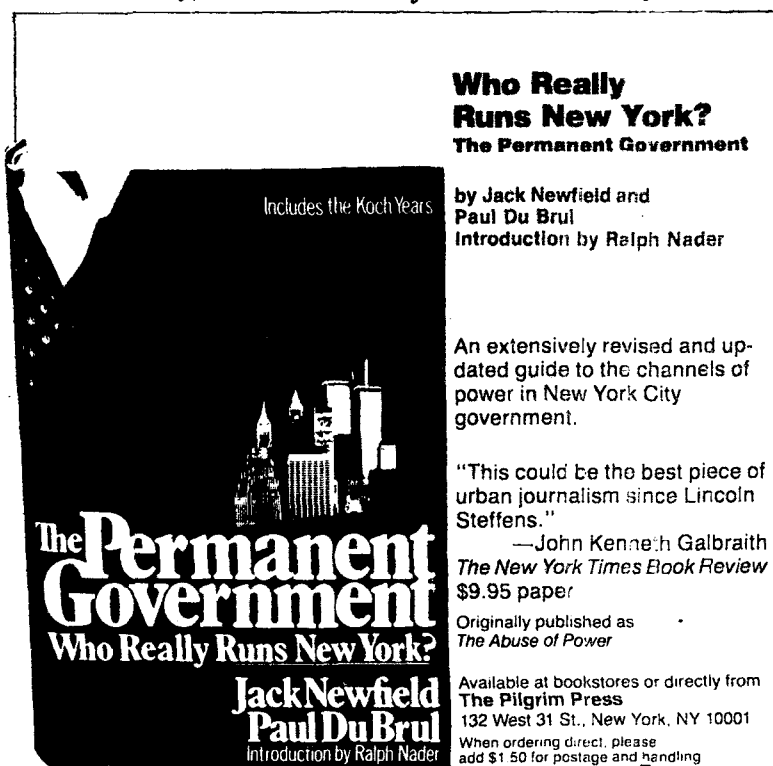
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COMMUNICATIONS

A dreamer's approach to electronic nightmare

Electronic Nightmare: The New Communications and Freedom
By John Wicklein
Viking, 320 pp., \$15.95

By Tim Haight

John Wicklein's work warns us about serious threats that accompany the marketing of the "communications of abundance." Yet the book is subtly flawed. It leaves us concerned about *almost* the right issues.

Wicklein wanted to write a book that would alert us to the dangers of monopoly control of communications, new opportunities for government censorship and the likelihood of diminished privacy and increased surveillance in the future.

He came very close to doing this, and along the way he recorded the history of the major experiments with two-way cable, satellites, teletext and electronic publishing. He also provided an excellent description of how Sweden and other countries are making strong policies to combat invasion of privacy, and drew a chilling scenario about how an autocratic regime such as Brazil might use an integrated telecommunications network.

So what happened? Consider the essentials of Wicklein's argument: We are moving inexorably toward a relatively near future when most homes, except those of the very poor, will have a home communications set (HCS). This will be a combination of a computer and a television set, and it will allow us to receive TV broadcasts, cable, direct satellite broadcasts and teletext. It will have an interactive capacity allowing us to "talk back," permitting participation in two-way cable, videotext, electronic shopping and funds transfer, data bank retrieval, fire and burglar alarm systems and electronic mail.

The three main problems that Wicklein sees are, first, that one company may control access to the system, thus limiting what we can find out. Second, government regulations now applying to broadcasting may limit First Amendment rights in the new media, thus providing an opportunity for massive government censorship. Third, these new two-way systems allow the recording of great volumes of information about each user, providing a rich basis for surveillance and control.

Wicklein proposes that the government establish a national, publicly-owned, common-carrier wideband communications network with strong policies of access and accountability.

This would meet the threat of monopoly control. He would eliminate regulations such as the Fairness Doctrine and mandate strict First Amendment freedoms for electronic communicators, along the line of what is now available to the print media. Finally, he would establish a national privacy protection board that would set guidelines and inspect all data banks in the country.

He feels that this can only take place if aroused citizen groups convince the president to raise the standing of communications issues on the policy agenda by establishing a cabinet level Department of Communications.

One look at Ronald Reagan makes it clear that for the near term, the proposals in *Electronic Nightmare* are more of an electronic dream. But the more

monolith controlling access to our home communications set is not the main problem. The main problem is what we have now. We already have a communications system where it is virtually impossible to get major programs for change presented to audiences of any size. Consider the spectrum of opinion on the average supermarket magazine rack.

Further, it is unlikely that one company will achieve the control Wicklein fears. The competing economic ambitions, and the powerful lobbying, of the several communications conglomerates will insure that each of them gets a piece of the action. But what difference will it make if we get our data communications from AT&T, our cable from Time, Inc., and our satellite broadcasts from COMSAT? The entire debate over concentration of own-

publications can get access to your HCS. The larger publications will have an incentive to provide a package of content and distribution without providing a gateway to other publishers. Time, Inc., for example, is planning to offer teletext versions of *Time*, *Fortune*, *People* and *Sports Illustrated* over a satellite-networked cable channel. *In These Times* would probably have to join with other similar papers on its own data base accessed by telephone.

The question then becomes one of costs. As specialized long-distance carriers compete with Ma Bell for the business traffic, local calls and low-volume long-distance traffic will cost more. Readers will find it both more convenient and less costly to get *People* over cable than to call up *In These Times*. We will have the electronic equivalent of the sup-



Reformers are scrambling to secure social benefits of new technology (above, a computer in use at a senior citizens' center).

In these times, this is pretty strong stuff. The idea of replacing not only AT&T but also the cable empires being carved out by Time, Inc., Warner-Amex and the other biggies with a government-run corporation is not only mildly socialist but also taking on The Phone Company. And industry—with harmonies sung by the State Department and Congress—is already having fits over the data protection board in Sweden. Imagine how they would react to one here.

There is less potential opposition to Wicklein's other proposal, that of extending First Amendment protection to all electronic media. In fact, both the regulators under Reagan and the media are pushing for just such an arrangement.

Wicklein is aware that such sweeping changes in telecommunications policy would re-

fundamental problem is in the way Wicklein underestimates the political-economic system's ability to act as if it is protecting us against the dangers of information-control and surveillance while allowing them to continue. We could do all that he suggests and still find our future liberty vitally curtailed.

In addition, enacting some of his proposals would require an impossibly massive shift in legislators' pro-corporate attitudes. We would have to have economic and political democracy across the board before even his incremental proposals would have a chance. Proposing reforms in one issue-area, such as telecommunications, no longer makes sense. Our effort is better spent organizing a democratic left's program across all issues.

The threat of one corporate

ership ignores the question of control of communications by a class of owners.

Electronic supermarket rack.

It is true that communications are going to become more electronic. While we might prefer to carry our newspapers around and write checks by hand, we will probably be forced to change by economic incentives. The real profits from our "going electronic" will not be to us. Eighty percent of the costs of publishing a newspaper occur after the type has been set: in the paper, printing, trucks and the associated labor. A great deal of the cost of banking is associated with all the paper. Reducing these costs, and the number of employees, is very attractive to business.

Eventually, even *In These Times* may find that it could attract more readers with a cheap electronic version. Such publications depend on the second-class postal rate to cut mailing costs, and as businesses automate office communications, they will use the postal service less, reducing its volume. With all its fixed costs, the post office's deficit will grow, and political pressure will mount to cut the second-class subsidy. With the big magazine publishers going electronic, the lobbying that has kept the subsidy may abate.

The question will then be whether *In These Times* or similar

ermarket magazine rack.

This scenario does not require a monolithic control of the communications network to achieve hegemony in communication, any more than taxes on newspapers ultimately proved as effective as economic forces in giving us the mix of newspapers we have today.

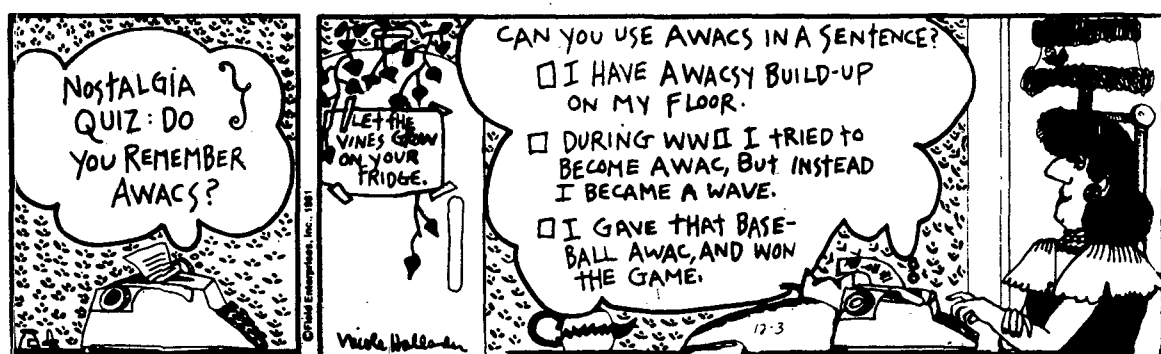
With respect to privacy, the situation is similar. Corporations, and government, have tremendous vested interests in privacy, both in protecting their own material and in making their dossiers on us as accurate as possible. Banks lose, too, if someone who is credit-worthy is denied through error. Thus we do have impetuses for privacy legislation, but mainly to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the surveillance system.

People would have the right to authorize any use of their files and to inspect them for accuracy. But as James Rule and his colleagues have pointed out in *The Politics of Privacy*, the real alternative is a "looser" society that could function without so much detailed information. But the momentum of privacy legislation—including Wicklein's ideas—is not in this direction.

Beyond the question of information attached to your name is data about you as a member of a group. One of the reasons Warner-Amex chose Columbus, Ohio, for its two-way cable system,

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

TELEVISION

The other side of the Alamo

Qube, was because that city was a favorite of market researchers. Even with your anonymity protected, the cable company can still sell information about what kinds of purchases are made by people who answer "yes" to certain poll questions and watch certain kinds of shows. Even granting the clumsiness of market research, it seems likely that this kind of information will make developing stronger techniques of persuasion much easier. And privacy legislation doesn't touch it.

Wicklein's third concern, that Fairness Doctrine rules will be applied to electronic newspapers and magazines, is ironic. Not only are business and conservative legislators pushing for it against the opposition of media reform groups, but also it weakens the case for access he otherwise makes. We are constantly being frightened by the twin threats of government and the corporations. But in a large society, what other alternatives for carrying out popular concerns exist?

Reformer's dilemma.

Perhaps the basic issue is whether at present government and business are too intertwined, so that people have no real alternative, and that the operations of neither are open to adequate scrutiny. The government/business/military alliance obviously influences more than telecommunications policy. Right now, it is pushing the ideology of the free market on all fronts. With all its faults, the Fairness Doctrine symbolizes an opposition to the play of marketplace forces in the realm of ideas. A general access policy would be preferable to the Fairness Doctrine notion of right-of-reply refereed by a government board, but those are not the alternatives being debated. Instead, we are asked to choose between faith in giant publishers and faith in bureaucrats.

Wicklein would choose faith in publishers, with a common-carrier system guaranteeing access to all. If we went beyond simple access, to a system of subsidy—some analog of the second-class postal rate for telephone charges and an appropriately accessible network—his suggestion might work. All this would require is nationalizing AT&T and breaking up the advantages that newspapers and cable systems will build in to the new systems to make their own content more easy to get.

Electronic Nightmare illustrates the dilemma of the reformer. For every innovative structural reform, there seems to be a loophole, particularly given the political process by which the reforms become law.

Wicklein's book is worth reading, however. While his reforms do not go far enough, he does point out enough scary possibilities to make us realize that even while we push for larger change, certain decisions will be made soon—such as providing even minimal privacy protection—that will require defensive action.

It has become fashionable to talk about "windows," periods of time after which action is impossible. It is possible that we have a window of communications freedom, after which even the limited channels of communication we have today will become much harder roads. And we may be much more closely watched, regardless of protective legislation, if the powerful find themselves defending their interests in a massive economic and political crunch. To the left, then, the *Electronic Nightmare* means waking up and getting on with it.

Tim Haight is professor of communications at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.



Seguin is a risky subject.

By Jim Miller

The Alamo and the short-lived Lone Star Republic of Texas, for most Americans, conjure up a succession of images in which the barely historical blurs lazily into a red-white-and-blue fantasy. Sam Houston, Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett meet John Wayne, Roy Rogers, Fess Parker and the Lone (Texas) Ranger, with a saucy senorita or two and a villainous, if greasily incompetent, Mexican general.

In *Seguin*, a 60-minute film shown Jan. 26 on public TV's new weekly drama series *American Playhouse*, Chicano director Jesus Salvador Trevino takes on this one-sided myth. Further, he dramatizes the situation of Chicanos living as "strangers in our own land"—a situation more bluntly put in a Texas *corrido* by Rumel Fuentes: *Zacatecas a Minnesota/De Tijuana a Nueva York/Dos paises son mi tierra/Los defiando con mi honor*. ("Zacatecas to Minnesota/From Tijuana to New York/Two countries are my land/I'll defend them with my honor.") With fitting irony, scenes at the Alamo were filmed in Brackettville, Texas, using a replica that John Wayne had built for the 1960 extravaganza, *The Alamo*.

The film is the story of Juan Nepomuceno Seguin (1806-1889), born a landowner's son in San Antonio, then a village in a remote corner of the crumbling Spanish empire. After Mexican independence Seguin's father welcomes colonists from the U.S., who also bring land hunger, slavery and an increasing contempt for their Mexican hosts.

When Mexico refuses statehood for Tejas (Texas) in 1835, Juan Seguin joins his friend Stephen Austin in a revolt against the Mexican dictator, Santa Anna, and recruits his *tejano* neighbors into the Second Regiment of Texas Volunteers. Narrowly escaping death at the Alamo, he is elected mayor of San Antonio, but along with fully half of the Mexican inhabitants of the town he is later forced to flee for Mexico, having found that he had helped win independence for Texas but not for *tejanos*.

He fights with the Mexican army against the U.S. during the

war of 1846-47, but after the advancing Americans raid Mexico City and annex half of the Mexican republic, Sam Houston pardons him and he returns to his holdings in Texas.

Today Seguin, Texas, a town of 16,000 just outside of San Antonio, bears his name, but before this film was shown to a local audience that included the newly elected Chicano mayor of San Antonio, few would have known why.

Choosing heroes.

For Trevino, one of a handful of Chicano directors, *Seguin* marks an advance over his Mexican feature, *Raices de Sangre*. Trevino has expressed his social concern through documentaries such as *Chicano Moratorium* and *Yo Soy Chicano*, through a stint as executive producer of the *Infinity Factory* series at PBS station WGBH in Boston and through his work to organize an association of Chicano filmmakers.

Trevino sees *Seguin* as only the opener of a six-part series, *La Historia*, using episodes on such little-known figures as Juan Jose Herrera, who led a New Mexican peasant revolt in the 1880s and founded the first Hispanic political party in the U.S.; and Sarap Estrella Ramirez, a schoolteacher who directed a successful railway workers' strike in Laredo, Texas, at the turn of the century. Trevino has worked for nearly five years on the project. This film was shot in 21 days on the small budget of \$500,000.

Trevino has taken a risk in choosing such an ambiguous figure to symbolize the Chicano experience. He has already received sharp criticism from one of the historians on his advisory panel, Rudy Acuna, a professor of Chicano studies at California State University at Northridge. *American Film* quotes Acuna as commenting, "To make heroes of the Mexican people defending the Alamo is like making heroes of the Vichy government.... When given a chance to reach a broad audience, I believe we have to be very selective in choosing our heroes." Acuna accuses Trevino of trying to produce a film that will be "salable to everyone" because of its inherent "accommodationist point of view."

Although Juan Seguin may be fascinating precisely because he was a prominent accommodationist—trapped between American racism and the military and economic weakness of the Mexicans—*Seguin* doesn't get a fix on his changing historical role or on his character. For instance, much is made of his strong opposition to slavery as a young man, but as Seguin makes his stand for Texas independence the issue of slavery drops from sight and with it much of the moral energy of the opening scenes, not to speak of explaining the shift in his perspective.

Seguin abruptly changes course three times during the film. Only in the first switch, when he throws in his lot with his Anglo neighbors, do we see him as a complex human being.

The second turnabout, which finds him fighting in the ranks of the Mexican army, comes over three-quarters of the way into the film and gets cursory motivation. An inattentive viewer will miss the fact altogether, since we never see Seguin actually doing anything in Mexico, except surviving the aftermath of the war. The final twist, his return to the scene of his humiliation in Texas, is motivated by a single line spoken by Seguin as narrator: "The bitterness I felt for the *Americanos* seemed useless. I was tired and had seen too much death on both sides."

Seguin starts out as if it has at least 90 minutes to tell its story and then crowds its final scenes into a few minutes. The effect is to simplify Seguin into an accommodationist with a curious sense of integrity. When the twists and turns of his situation and his choices are foreshortened, he becomes a hero almost by default. A narrator, complete with quill and paper, fills in the historical gaps.

Seguin thus misses its aim of speaking persuasively to Chicanos about the dilemmas of the Chicano situation today, although there is plenty in the film to set an observant person thinking. Nevertheless, it does succeed in making an endrun around the red-white-and-blue fantasy by placing Mexicans at the center of the history of the Southwest. ■ Jim Miller works at the *Cleveland Beacon* and conducted an interview with Jesus Trevino for *Cineaste* magazine in 1978.

Foreign

Continued from page 9

consistent with their attacks on the Turkish military regime and the ugly Latin American regimes allied to the U.S. When the U.S. defends Polish trade unionists, the obvious charge of hypocrisy comes up, since while the Reagan administration has not uttered a word more people are killed each week in Guatemala or El Salvador than in the entire brutal repression of Solidarity. In addition, the U.S. has asked for sanctions against Poland or the Soviet Union that devastate West European trade but has excluded measures like a grain embargo, which would be unpopular at home.

The case the French seem to be making is that European defense policy must be uncoupled from those American policies that are not in the obvious interests of its allies. Unless the U.S. learns this, we may soon see a neo-Gaullist Europe that is increasingly independent of both superpowers. This would be a momentous achievement for the most conservative American administration. —Coolidge.

Arts

Continued from page 13

white-based culture is as meaningless for white as black, in the future of South Africa.

When we turn to the nature of the work the artist produces, we become aware of the terrible problems in which the artist is enmeshed while following those imperatives, even if, as in the case of black artists, he feels sure he knows his way.

Post-apartheid art.

The nature of contemporary art in South Africa, in the aspect of subject-matter, is didactic, apocalyptic, self-pitying, self-accusatory as much as indicting. Apartheid in all its manifestations—the petty jigger that niggles under the skin, the bullet that reaches the heart— informs the ethos of what is produced even by a non-objective painter or an architect seeking an aesthetic for cheap housing to replace a squatters' camp. As the French writer, Pieyre de Mandiargues, says in one of his novels, "When you have been given a disaster that seems to exceed all measure, must it not be recited, spoken?" But when we posit a post-apartheid art—and we must, right now, out of the necessity implied by the facts examined so far—we switch off the awful dynamism of disinte-

gration and disaster.

The important cultural debate that was taking place in South Africa in the early and mid-1970s in publications such as the yearly *Black Review* and the publications of the Black Community Programs, has long been cut off by the banning of organizations and individuals concerned. The result is that black art has not really visualized itself beyond protest. It has not even dealt with aspects of present-day art that do a disservice to the very purpose relevance imposes upon them—for example, the commodity-maker of "black image" sculpture and painting, the production of artifacts of protest that the white man hangs on his wall as he keeps a souvenir carved walking-stick in his hall. These aspects may have grave effects on the future of art.

In the dragon's-breath heat of the present, this neglect is more than understandable. But understanding does not shift aside problems that will confront the new black culture. Black thinkers are aware of them. Black writers Ezekiel Mphahlele and Lewis Nkosi began an inquiry 20 years ago, and their essays were banned. Two decades later, it is a continuingly shameful and criminally stupid action on the part of the South African government to have reduced the black cultural debate to conferences of exiles, and exile publications, and, at home, to the audacious pages of one literary journal, *Staffrider*, which streaks across the gauntlet of censorship with every issue.

Black artists are primarily concerned with a resuscitation of the pre-colonial culture as a basis for an indigenous modern African culture. The colonial period is seen as an interruption; the attitude taken is that pre-colonial ideas, concepts and skills were concreted-over by the laying down of a culture based solely on white cultural values. Black artists break through the concrete with the drums and folk epics that celebrate the past and effectively place the heroes of the present liberation struggle—Mandela, Sobukwe, Biko, Hector Petersen—in a parthenon of inspirational culture-heroes along with the pioneers of black literature itself, Sol Plaatje and Thomas Mofolo.

But to embody the objective reality of modern blacks, writers and artists will have to synthesize with all this the aspirations of people who still want TV and jeans. It is comparatively easy to create a "people's art"—that is to say an aesthetic expression of fundamentally-shared experience, during a period when the central experience of all, intellectuals, workers and peasants alike, is oppression: in South Africa, the pass laws are a grim cultural unifier. It is quite another matter when the impact of experience breaks up into differing categories of class experience.

The avowed black aim is a culture springing from and belonging to the peo-

ple, not a white-collar elite. This new orientation involves turning away from Europe but at the same time setting up an essential relationship between the past and the technological present—the latter being recognized as *something distinct* from the inherent threat of all-white culture. For the technological age is something that cannot be denied and is with blacks in Africa forever. Similarly, the tools of white culture—most importantly written literature—that have been appropriated by blacks, and rightfully, since the evolution of means of expression belongs to all who have the will to use them, should be recognized as independent of that threat.

Nostalgia and alienation.

A post-apartheid art, beyond liberation in the political sense, freed of *agitprop*, and moving on within the context of liberation in which black culture sees its future—unless black artists can achieve a strong, organic synthesis on these lines their art will be nostalgic. They will be in danger of passing into a new phase of alienation. The question of relevance and commitment will come up again.

If the white artist is to move on to express Yeats' "life that has never found expression," this presupposes, on the one hand, that white culture will remake itself, and on the other that black culture will accept the white artist as one who has struck down to root in an indigenous culture. Unless this happens he will know less of the realities he came to recognize when he rejected the false consciousness constituted in traditional white-based culture. In the post-apartheid era, the white's position will depend much more on external forces than will that of the black artist. Having changed his life—no less—the white artist may perhaps stake his place in a real indigenous culture of the future by claiming that place in the implicit nature of the artist as an agent of change, always moving toward truth.

It is in the artist's nature to want to transform the world. The revolutionary sense, in artistic terms, is the sense of totality, the conception of a "whole" world, where theory and action meet in the imagination. Whether this "whole" world is in the place where black and white culture might become something other, wanted by both black and white, is a question neither I, nor anyone else in South Africa, can answer; only pursue.

It's difficult to end on the customary high note—the state of culture in South Africa does not encourage it. Yet when I go so far as to use "we" to speak for

South Africa's writers and artists, black and white, the pronoun in itself expresses some kind of obstinate collective intention to assume that there is at least the possibility of a single, common, indigenous nature for art in South Africa. Any optimism is realistic only if we, black and white, can justify our theories and hopes by regarding ourselves as what Octavio Mannoni, in his study of the effects of colonialism, *Prospero and Caliban*, terms "apprentices of freedom."

Only as apprentices of freedom may we perhaps look out for, coming over the Hex river mountains of the Cape, or the Drakensberg of Natal, that "guest from the future"—the artist as prophet of the resolution of divided cultures. ■

Schools

Continued from page 17

unduly challenge the Board's minimal desegregation proposal, the only remaining obstacle is the court. Judge Shadur should rule on the acceptability of both the *Recommendations on Educational Components* and the *Student Assignment Principles* early in 1982. If the judge rejects Chicago's plans, the Board and the experts must develop another, perhaps stronger, set of proposals. But if Judge Shadur accepts the Board's plans, Chicago's schoolchildren will witness, and suffer from, another performance of the act the Chicago system has staged for the last decade—implementing desegregation and educational improvement plans that result in Chicago-style dual schooling. ■

This is the first of two articles on Chicago schools. Next week's article will examine their current performance. Future articles will examine the school systems in Los Angeles and Atlanta.

Norm Fruchter is currently a Revson fellow at Teachers College, Columbia University.

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Zoot suit

Continued from page 24

limits that film, with its capacity for naturalism, is supposed to be able to transcend.

Universal's original plan for the item that studio executive Ned Tanen thought could break into "the Hispanic market" was simply to videotape an evening's performance of the stage play. Luis Valdez held out for a bigger budget and made a real movie instead. The quality of the result, given the low budget and 14-day shooting time, has something to do with the fact that the production was delayed by the actors' strike, and Valdez was able to hone the script.

But the look of the film—in which the wide-screen intimacy of a love scene alternates with a proscenium-arch-framed dance number before the camera pans over the audience—has to do with the concept of the production. The film jokes with us about art and reality, about the importance of artifice in life. When El Pachuco snaps his fingers and changes a scene, there is no staginess about it—only all the artifice of the *pachuco* style.

Wild juxtapositions and mordant visual humor result from abandoning naturalist constraints. For instance, a band of GIs walk through the set, all with rifles

except for the eager new Chicano recruit, who is wielding a giant switchblade-rifle. Stage flats become object lessons; a backdrop is part judicial facade and part a newspaper headline, commenting succinctly on the press-shaping of public opinion. The merging of drama and musical makes macabre sense; when the young men on trial must rise when their names are mentioned, they act out a tragicomic merry-go-round.

Dirty secrets.

Zoot Suit became a phenomenon in Los Angeles, where it started out as a stage play. When I saw it in 1979, the rapport between the actors and an audience composed in part of *pachucos* and children of *pachucos* had a rare electric quality. The audience was watching its own reality affirmed, and there was a sense of delighted astonishment.

"We used to have *pachuco* 'confessionals' after the show," said Daniel Valdez. "People would come in period dress, too—sometimes their zoot suits were better than the costumes we had."

Not everyone was delighted to see the world of the *pachuco* reborn, though. Some of the Sleepy Lagoon case families, for instance, are still living down the shame of the trial and the tragedy of wasted time. One of the defendants met angrily with Luis Valdez. "He's now 57, he's had a hard life and he looks it," said Valdez. "He told me that his father—who's been dead for years now—had

never gotten over that trial, and I could still see the shaken teenager in his eyes."

The play stirred controversy when it played in Texas, where many Chicanos are ashamed of the *pachuco* image. And in New York, where the Broadway version failed, Valdez thinks that to many New Yorkers the *pachuco* image only connoted "dangerous dude." (He also thinks that the \$25 ticket price was too steep for many in the play's potential audience.)

"Some people have said to us, 'You're exposing our secrets—why make a play about this stuff?' And some have told us we're glorifying gang warfare," said Valdez. "But I think it's a production that doesn't have a simple message. It makes Chicanos think as much as it does anyone."

"Theater and film can reveal the human side of these vast social issues. *Zoot Suit* is just one in an encyclopedia of works that need to be made. The U.S. is becoming an Anglo-Hispanic culture—and I mean that linguistically—and we can't afford to be ignorant of each other."

Valdez' life work has explored cultural stereotypes and assumptions, and his theater productions have been marked by bold use of symbols. He continues to explore the images of Hispanic culture in the U.S., focusing on four types that "are like totems to me"—the El Pachuco figure; the farmworker; the Latin woman; and the bandit.

Presently El Teatro Campesino is producing *Bandido*, about "the last of the California bandits," named Tiburcio Vasquez.

"It's a Western, from a Chicano point of view," he said. "These Old West icons have enormous importance for us. The myths influence us culturally and politically. Look, now there's a cowboy in the White House."

Luis Valdez claims a double allegiance to his art and to his culture, and he rejects any mechanical relationship between the two. Daniel Valdez is equally concerned to develop culturally-rich art, with his musical talents. He is presently working on retelling the Richie Valens story—"No one knows his real name was Valenzuela, and he had an enormous influence on popular music," he said. He also dreams of producing an opera on the subject of the conquest of Mexico.

Zoot Suit is impressive testimony to the goals of Luis and Daniel Valdez—to communicate across as well as to celebrate the distinctiveness of the cultures of this country. In fact, if *Zoot Suit* can both address and transcend "the Hispanic market" that Universal is aiming for, then it will also help us to perceive more than the reality of Hispanic culture. It will also shed light on the protective, destructive nature of American isolationism. El Pachuco cracks through our insular stereotypes. But more than that, he is powerful proof of the force, and the limits, of cultural defenses. ■

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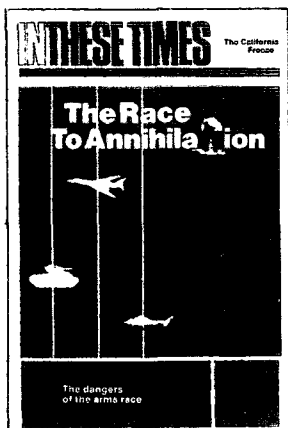
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EL PACHUCO, THE CENTRAL character of the movie musical, *Zoot Suit*, may well be on his way into our national mythology. But if so, he's no less ambiguous a culture hero than the man that John Wayne has come to represent in Anglo culture.

Zoot Suit (Universal) tells the story of an infamous trial—the Sleepy Lagoon case in Los Angeles, 1942. Twenty-two young Chicano “zoot suiters”—*pachucos*, gang members who talked in an arcane street slang and dressed in elaborate costumes—were summarily arrested after an unexplainable murder. Twelve of them were sentenced to San Quentin before being released on appeal.

It was widely thought that their real crime was being poor, spunky and Chicano at a jingoistic moment in our national history. *Zoot Suit* doesn't dispute that interpretation.

But this isn't soap opera or agitprop. The focus isn't even on the event, but rather on the social conditions in which it happened. A didactic film might ask, “What did WASP justice do to *pachuco* leader Henry Reyna?” A made-for-TV film might ask, “Who *did* murder the Chicano in Sleepy Lagoon?” *Zoot Suit* asks, “How did Reyna's culture both sustain and sabotage him?” (Reyna is a composite of several of the major figures in the case.)

To ask that question, writer-director

El Pachuco intimidates Henry as he lounges on a door jamb, contemptuously regarding Henry or languidly pulling on a joint while waiting in the back seat of a car. He inspires Henry as El Pachuco rises from a beating in an Aztec loincloth. He sets the tone when he sings and plays “Marijuana Boogie” at a neon-lit piano, accompanied by a Satanic trio of *pachucas*. The interplay between the two characters—Henry offers resistance to El Pachuco as well as respect—offers the best and worst of male kindness and cruelty, self-possession and self-absorption. You don't have to forgive him his excesses in order to understand Henry Reyna. There are advantages—pure survival-skill advantages—as well as costs in the elaborate poses that El Pachuco teaches him.

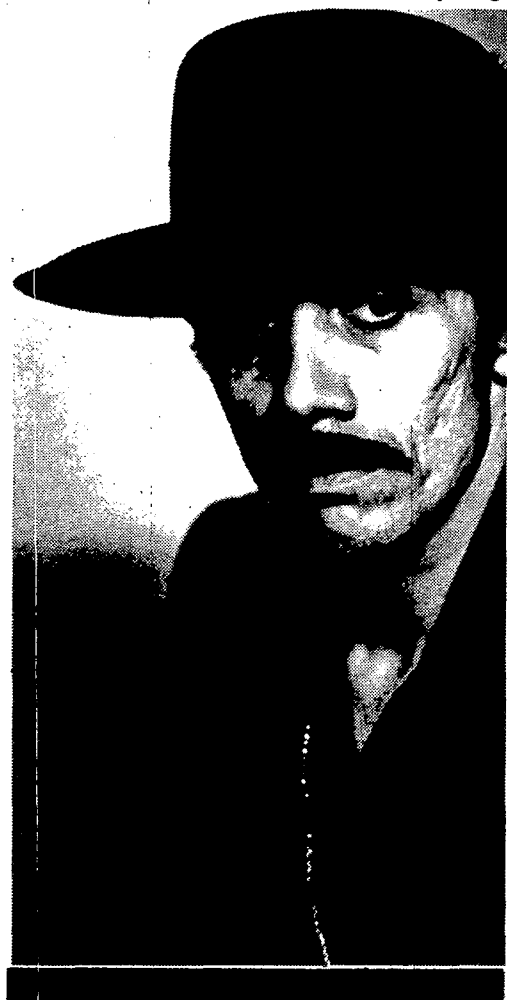
In this man's universe the women courageously work within El Pachuco's stern limits. Some, the *pachucas*, are as caught up in the romance of being bad as the toughest of their boyfriends. Others play the madonna role that is the flip side of the bad girl. And when sparks—both cultural and sexual—fly between Henry and Alice the organizer, they also light up the way that *macho* sex roles confine both men and women.

It's a hefty job, to explain the ideology of *machismo*, but El Pachuco has too much style to let you feel it. He may be devastating, but he's never ponderous. No sooner has he made his point

Puente and Lalo Guerrero, and singers like the Hermanas Padilla (Latin analogues to the Andrews sisters). There's the dancing, not just well-executed and authentic, but done in such a way to let you see that these were real people—girls and boys in love and on the town—not precise, *All That Jazzy* automaton and professional body parts. There's the clothing and the posing, the preening of young people who are intensely self-conscious and proud.

And then there is the critical item—language. The film uses *pachuco* slang, often unintelligible to a later generation of Chicanos, much less to Puerto Ricans or Anglos. The distributors are experimenting with subtitles to explain the

For El Pachuco,
style is everything.



Behind the high-style singing, dancing and posing of Zoot Suit is a critical portrait of a macho subculture.

Clothes Make The Myth

By Pat Aufderheide



Henry (center) plays the tough guy when a rival gang leader (Miguel Delgado, right) threatens him.

Luis Valdez—founder of El Teatro Campesino and creator of the stage play *Zoot Suit*—created El Pachuco (played on screen, as on stage, by Edward Olmos). El Pachuco is the image of the warrior-male, exemplifying a macho set of expectations that both preserves one's dignity and enchains one within rigid behavior.

El Pachuco is Reyna's shadow. He appears in elegant dress, a macho superego, invisible to all but Henry (played by Daniel Valdez, Luis' brother). He urges Henry to defend himself and his girlfriend when threatened—but also to commit murder and rape. He gives Henry the fighting spirit to survive jail, but also urges him to refuse the aid of a leftist organizer (in real life, Alice Broomfield, and here played by Tyne Daly). He is the dapper, menacing street fighting man and also the steely man of principle who cannot be broken by third degree or public humiliation.

than, with a contemptuous and lordly flip of the hand, he dismisses its importance. After all, his gesture says, style is everything. Naive aspiration—Henry's desire to join the Navy, to be a respectful lover and a hardworking son, to win his court appeal—is uncool. It's better, when the deck is so sharply stacked, to be cynical.

All the artifice of life.

El Pachuco, in his double-edged glory, is the source of the film's strength and its controversy. But *Zoot Suit* does more than offer this central symbolic device. It also delivers the savor and snap of *pachucismo*, so that you feel not only the survival value but the joy, the wit, the cockiness of this pop subculture.

There's the music, composed by Daniel Valdez, taking its cue from the period popularity of Latin musicians like Tito

Spanish phrases that sprinkle the first part of the film, but subtitles may not be necessary. Even if you don't understand the words you understand their logic. The special argot creates a special world; it's an outsiders' technique to transform themselves into insiders.

The production is as full of wit and punch as any of its zoot suiters is. The transformation from play to screen was not only efficient—this is a bargain-basement \$2.5 million movie—but brilliant. It capitalizes on precisely the theatrical

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